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(54) **SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE WITH OXIDE SEMICONDUCTOR**

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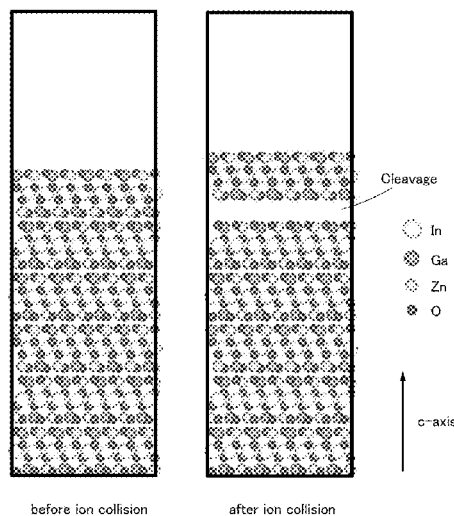
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A highly reliable semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor is provided. Provided is a semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor layer, an insulating layer in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer, a gate electrode layer overlapping with the oxide semiconductor layer, and a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer electrically connected to the oxide semiconductor layer. The oxide semiconductor layer includes a first region having a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm and a second region which overlaps with the insulating layer with the first region provided therebetween and which includes a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of the surface of the oxide semiconductor layer.

17 Claims, 29 Drawing Sheets



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FIG. 1A

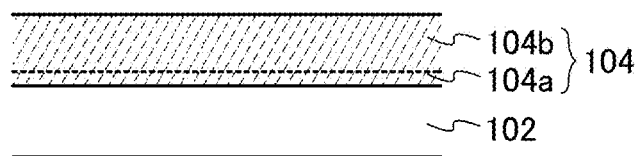


FIG. 1B

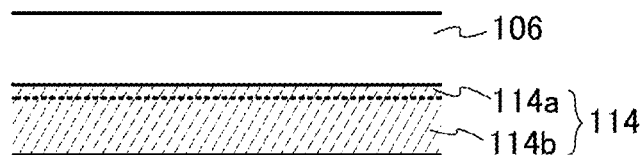


FIG. 1C

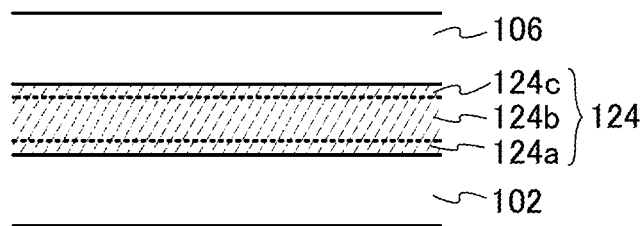


FIG. 2A

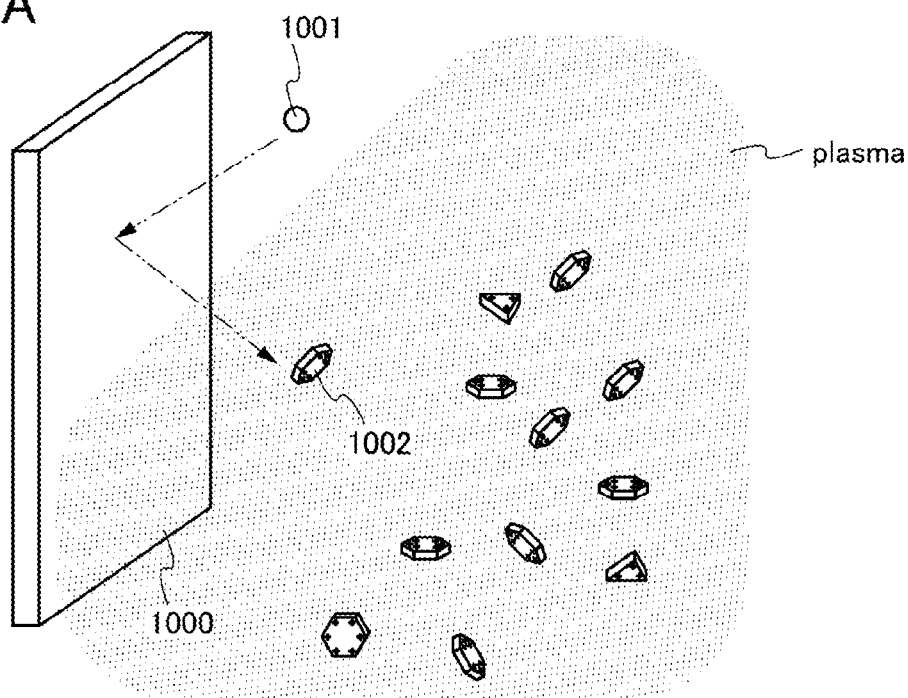


FIG. 2B

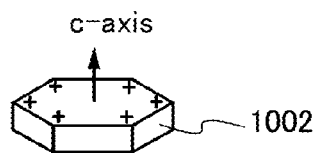


FIG. 3A

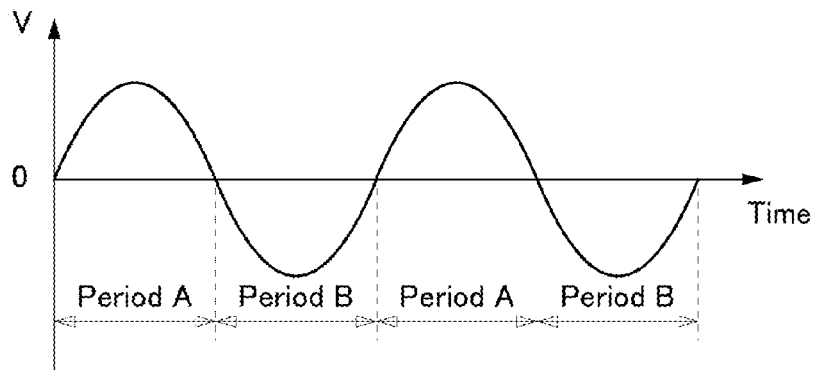


FIG. 3B1

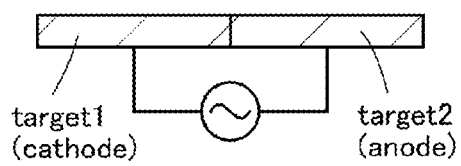


FIG. 3B2

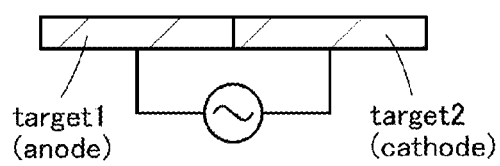


FIG. 3C

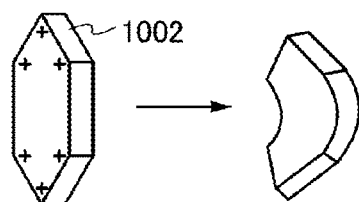


FIG. 4

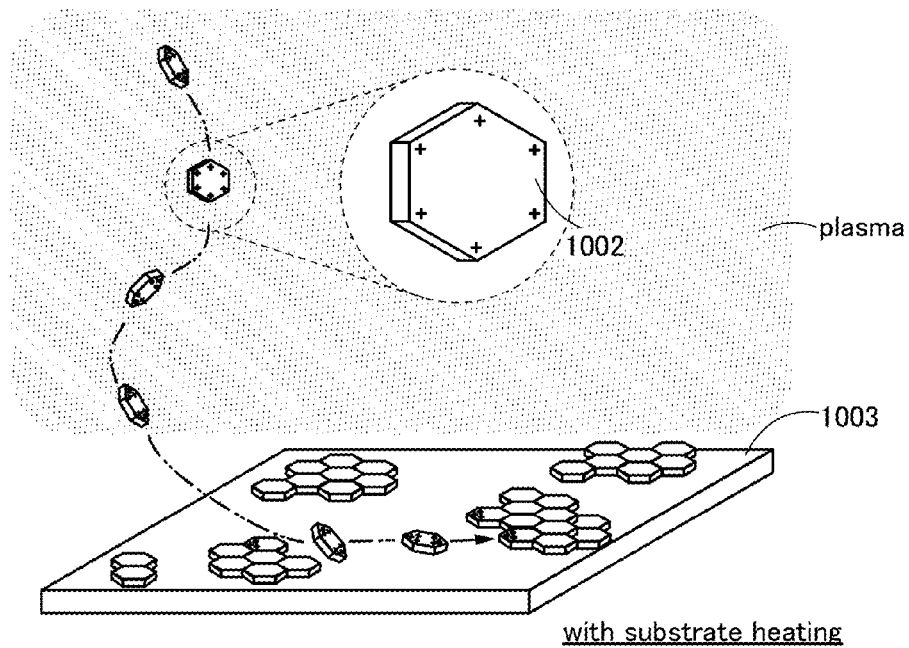


FIG. 5

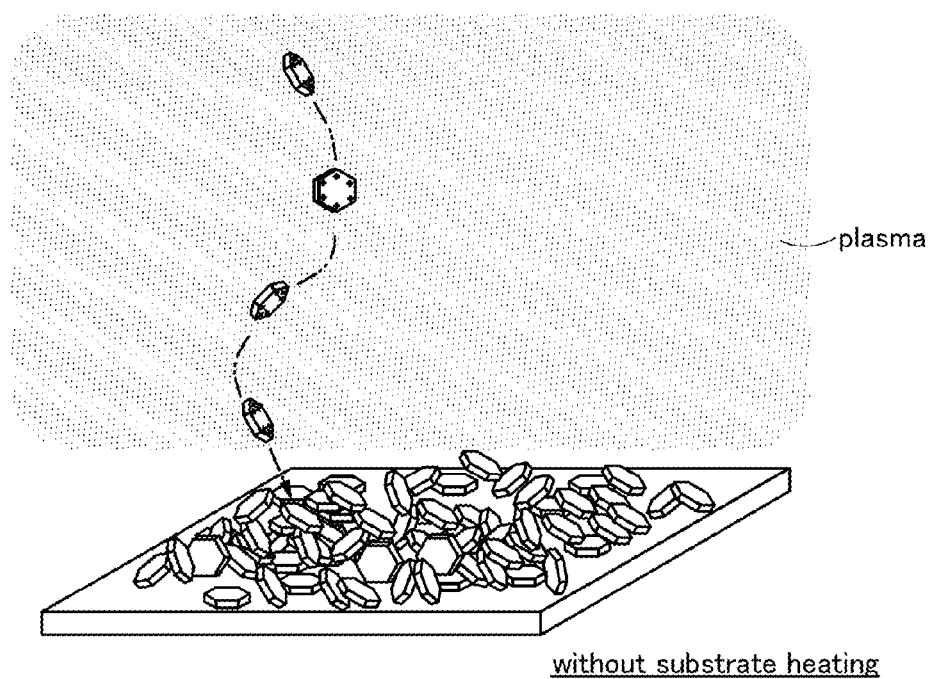
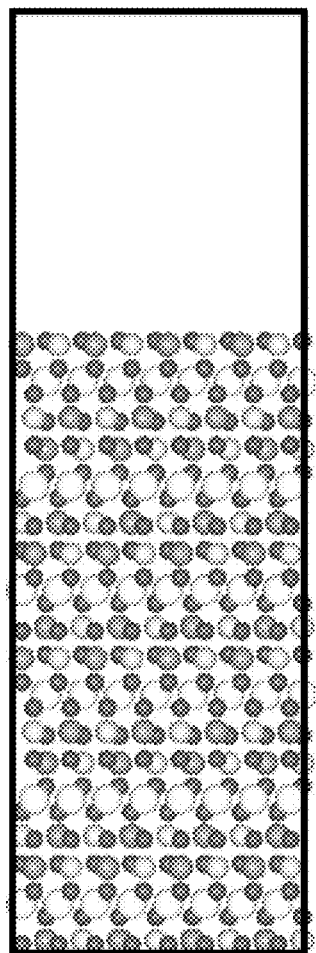
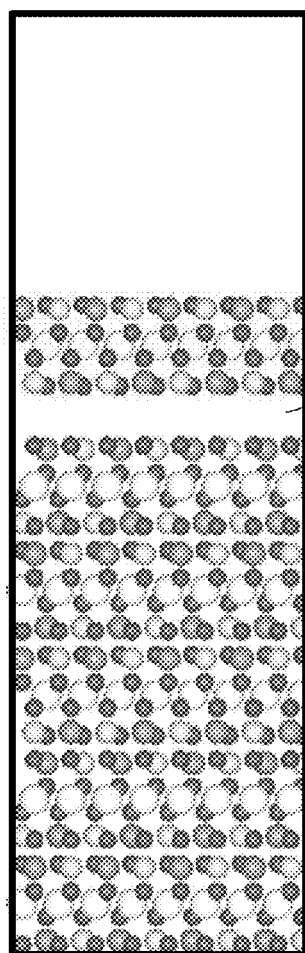


FIG. 6A



before ion collision

FIG. 6B



after ion collision

Cleavage

- In
- ⊗ Ga
- ⋯ Zn
- O



c-axis

FIG. 7A

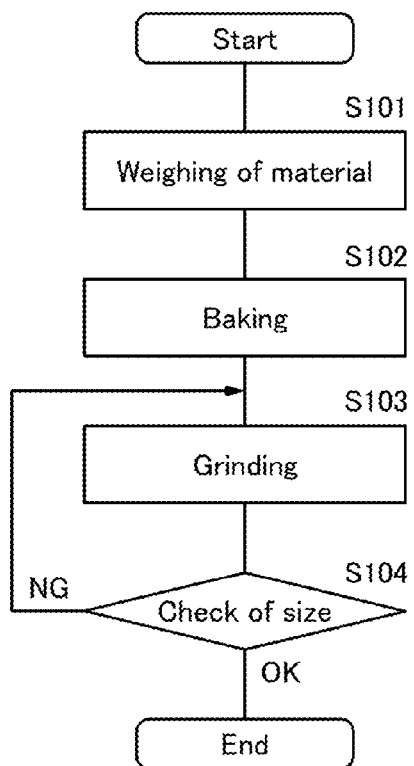


FIG. 7B

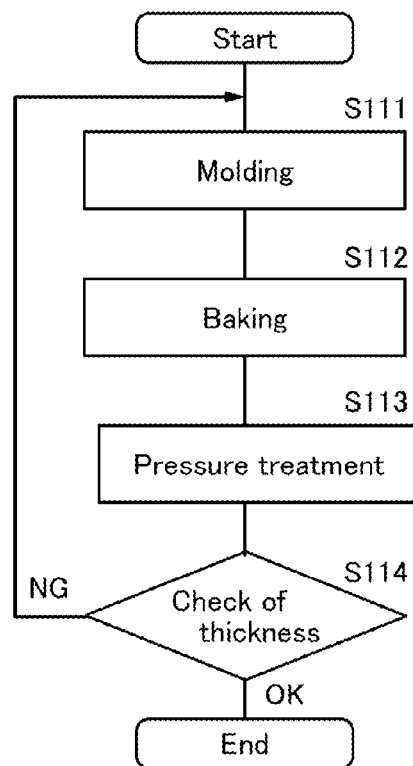


FIG. 8A

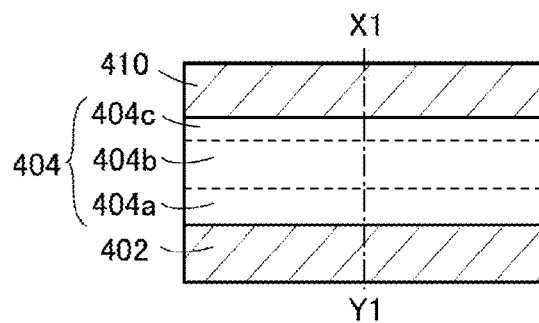


FIG. 8B

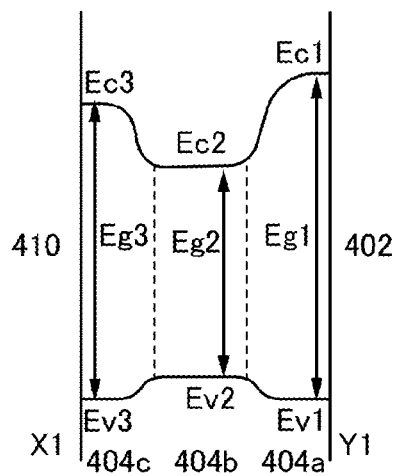


FIG. 9A

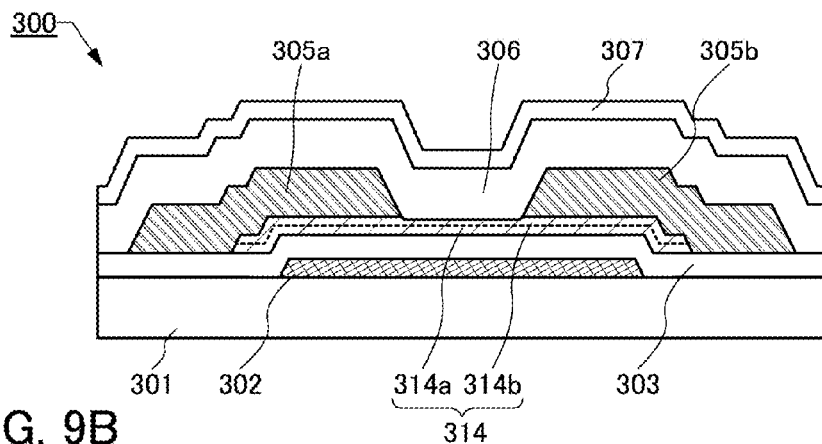


FIG. 9B

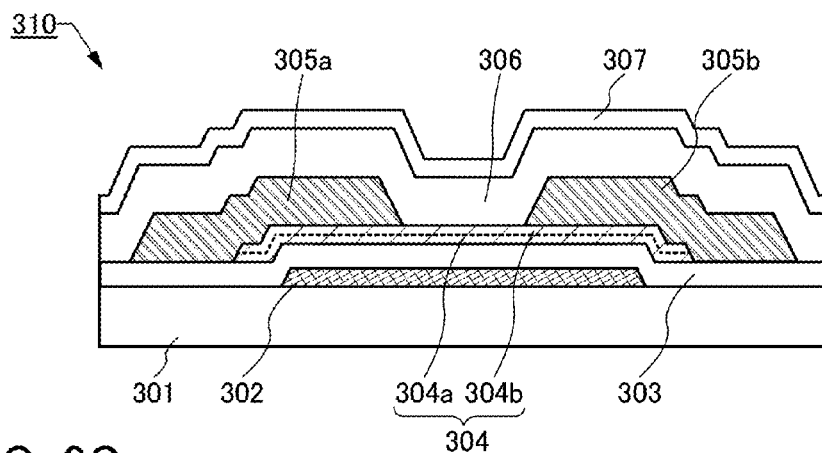


FIG. 9C

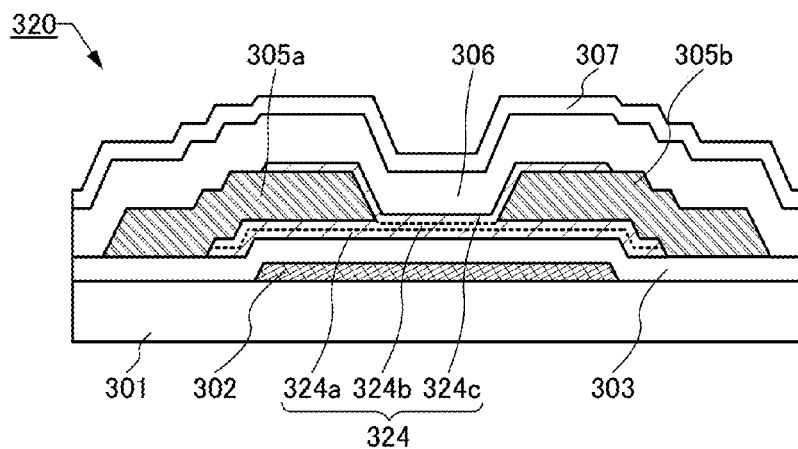


FIG. 10A

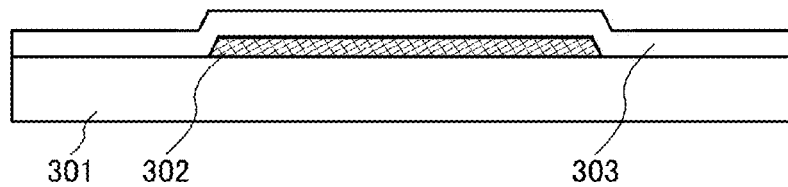


FIG. 10B

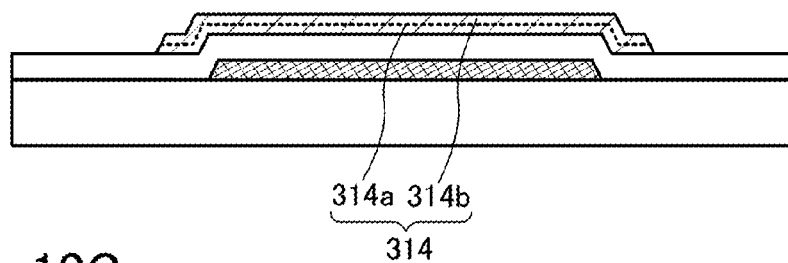


FIG. 10C

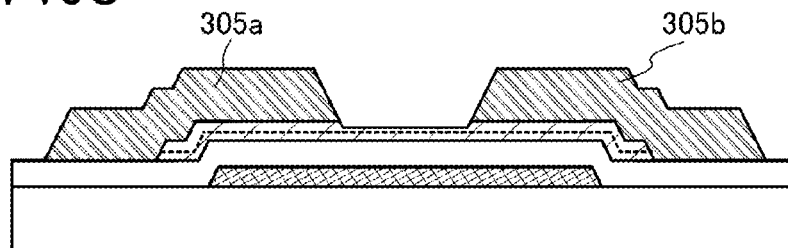


FIG. 10D

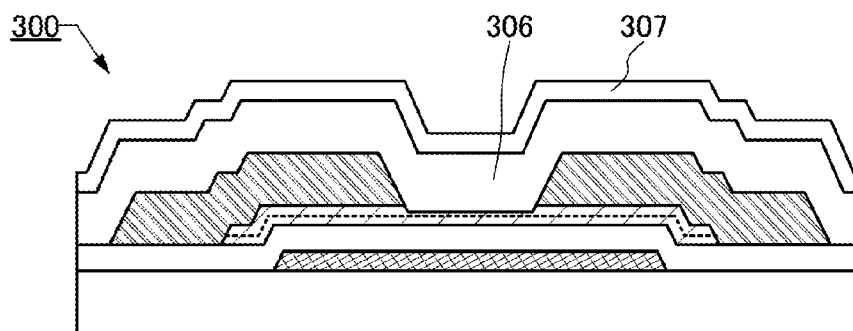


FIG. 11A

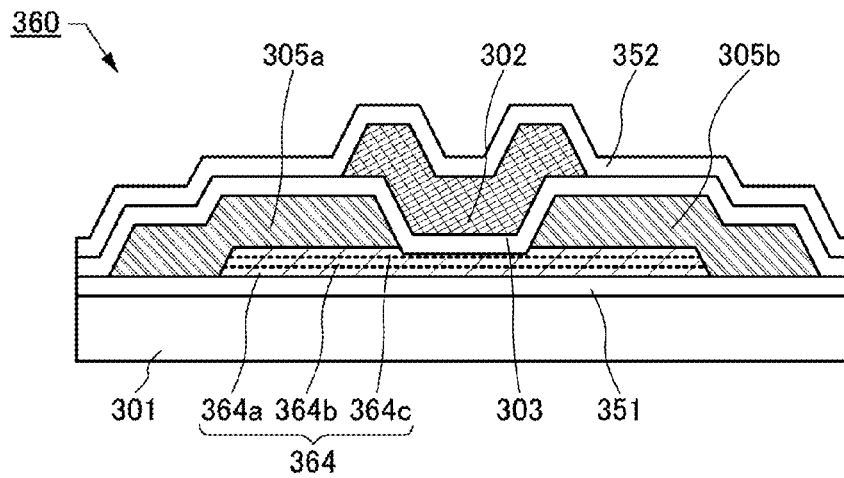


FIG. 11B

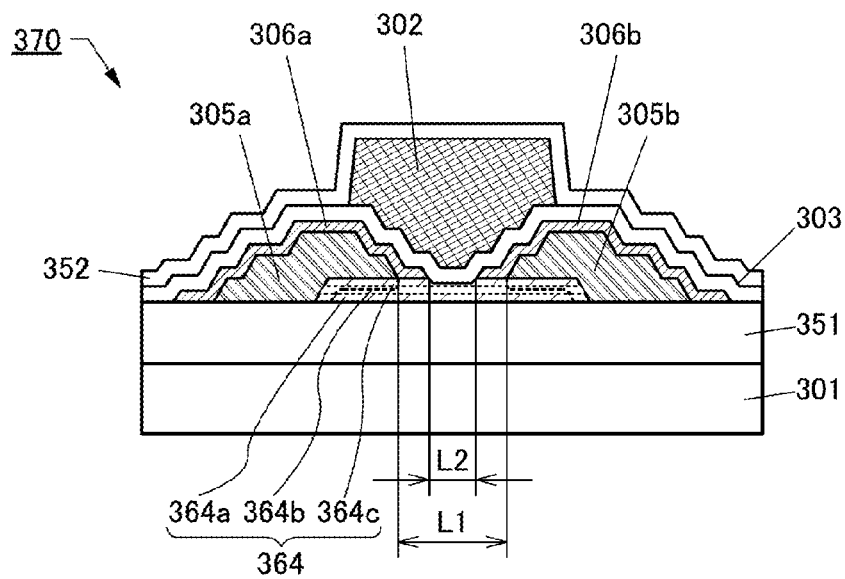


FIG. 12A

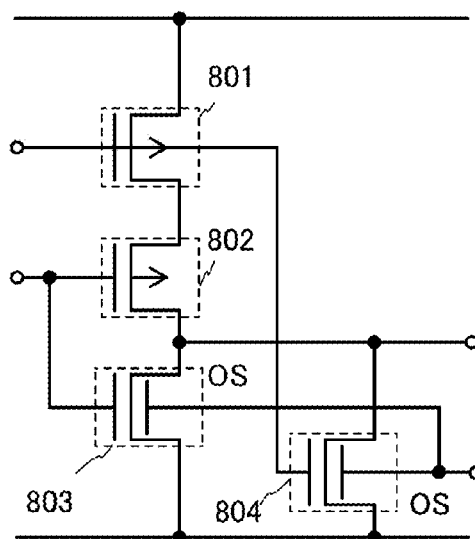


FIG. 12B

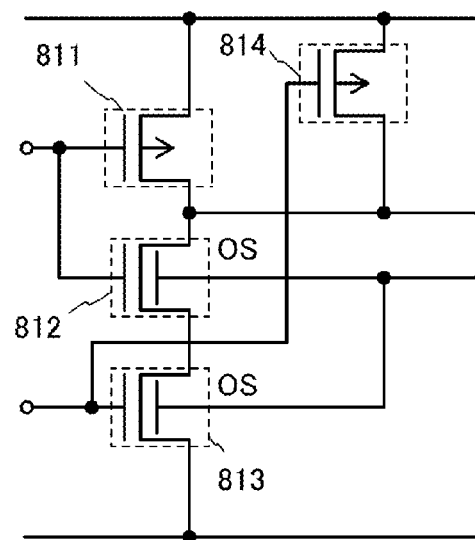


FIG. 13A

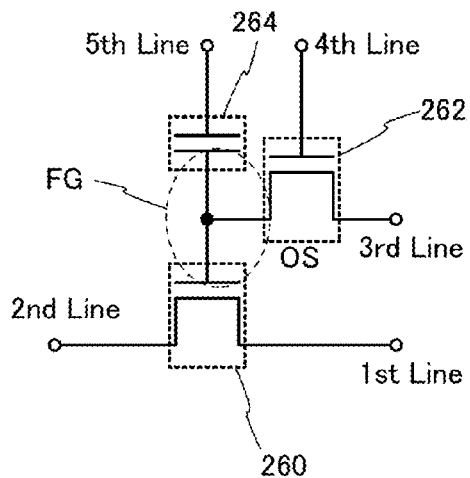


FIG. 13B

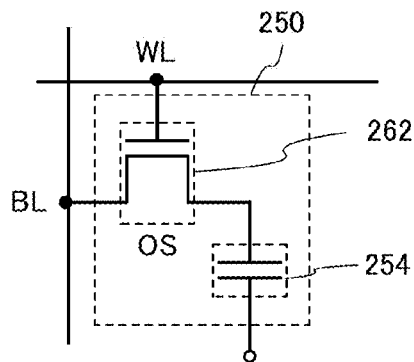


FIG. 13C

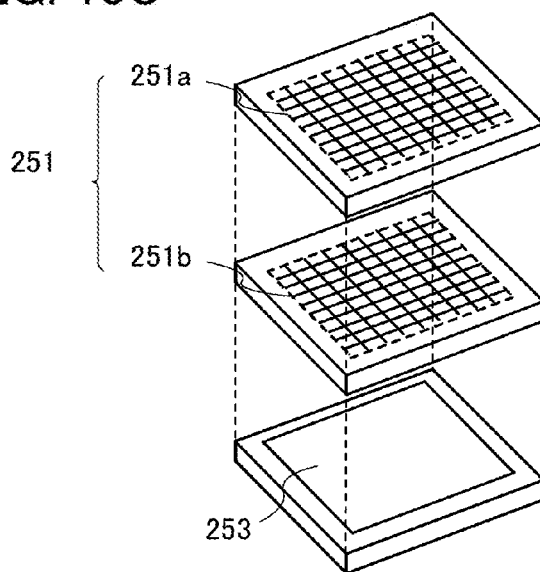


FIG. 14A

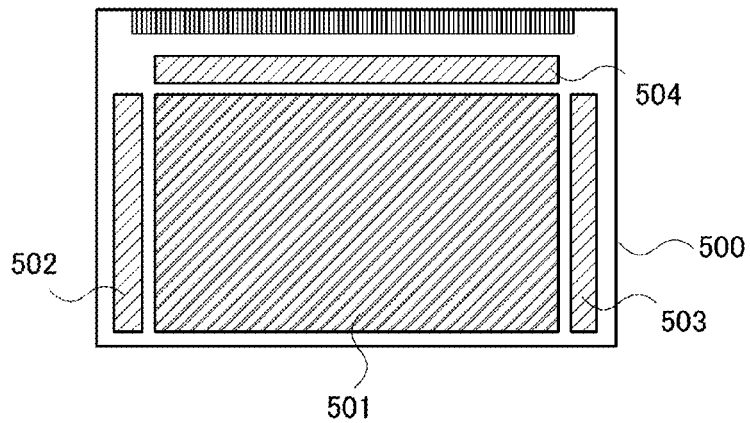


FIG. 14B

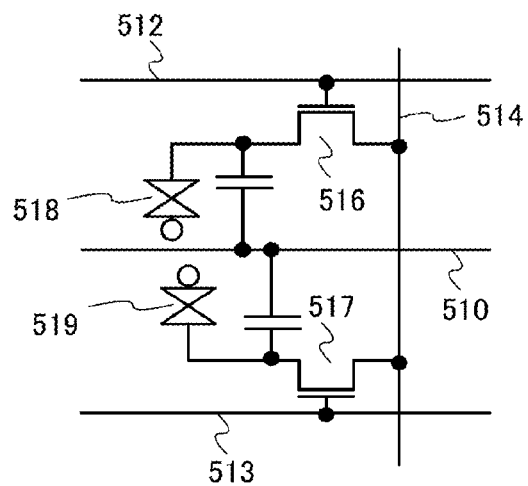


FIG. 14C

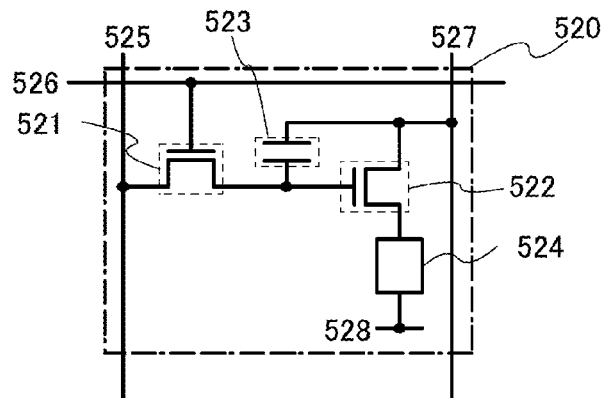


FIG. 15

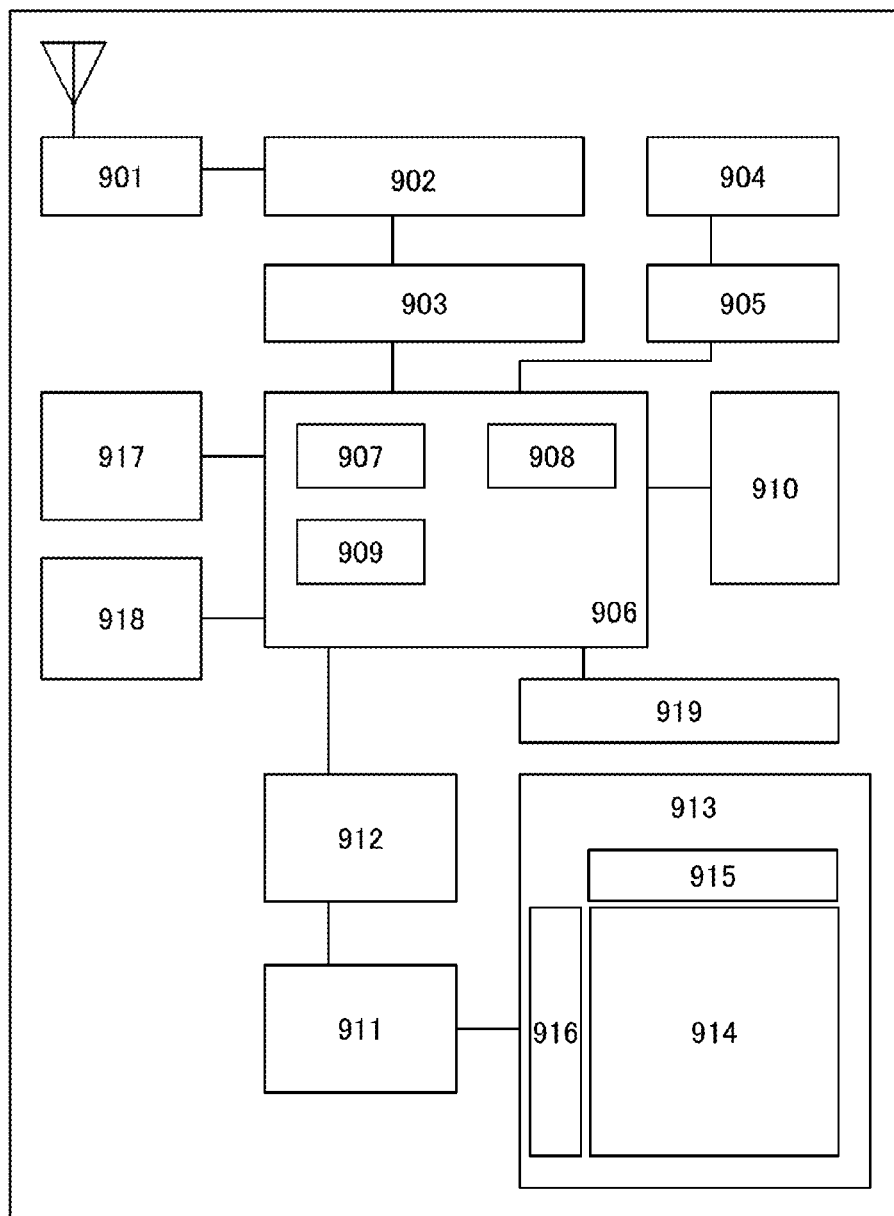


FIG. 16A

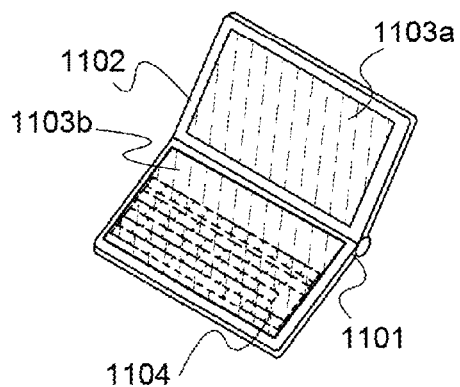


FIG. 16B

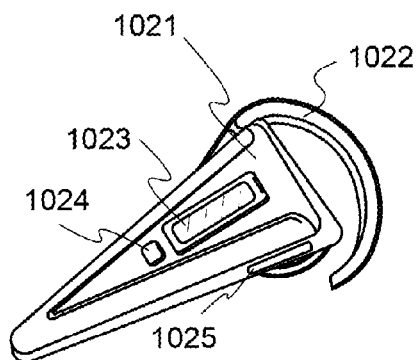


FIG. 16C

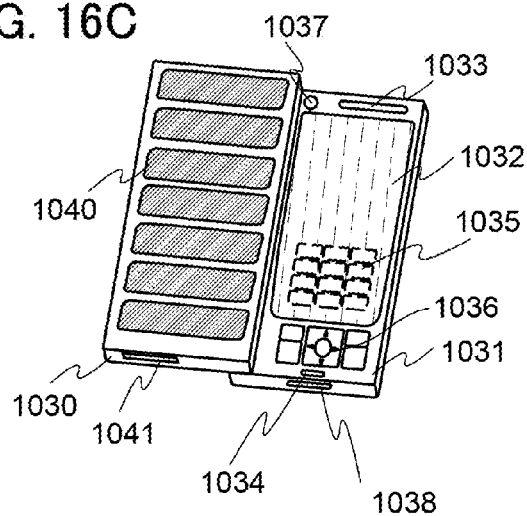


FIG. 16D

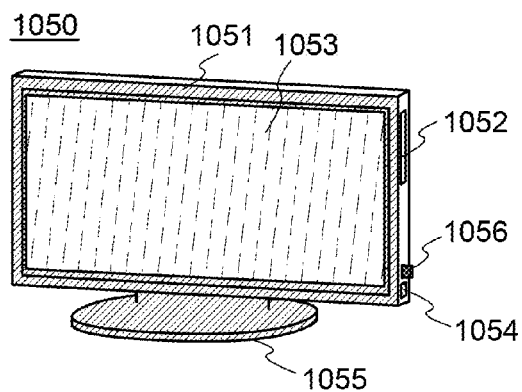


FIG. 17A

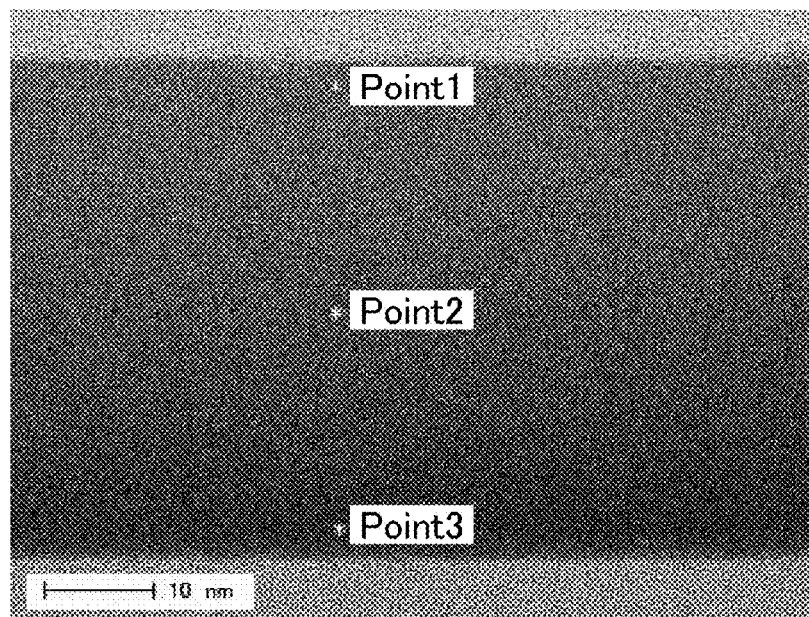


FIG. 17B

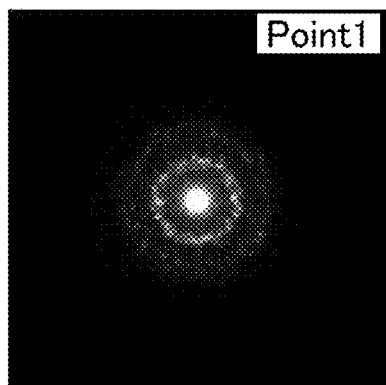


FIG. 17C

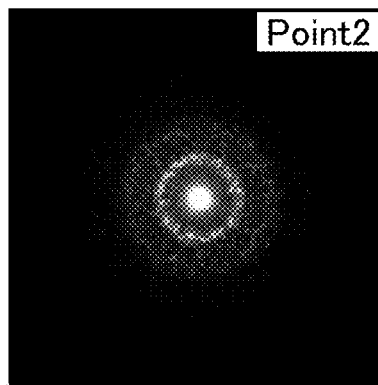


FIG. 17D

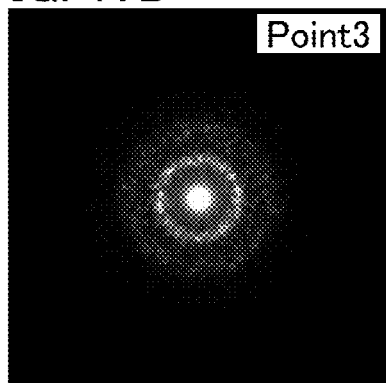


FIG. 18A

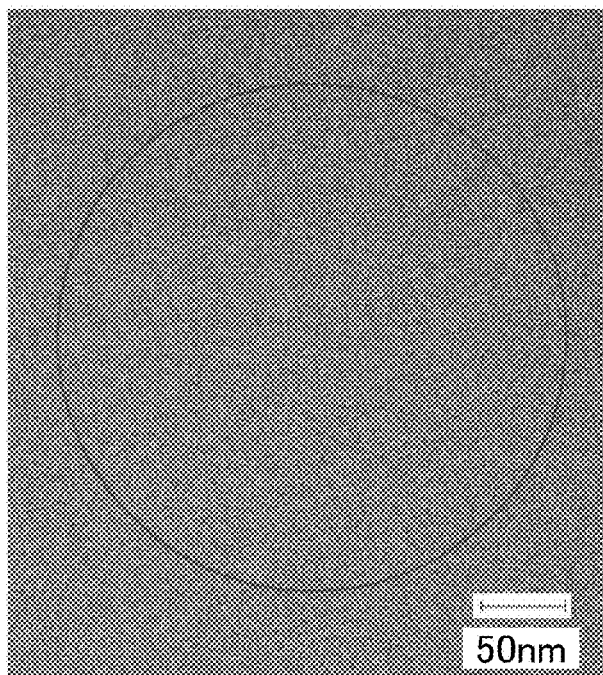


FIG. 18B

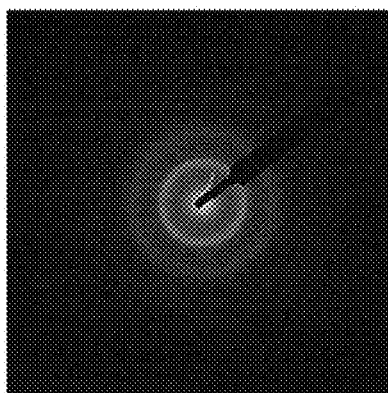


FIG. 19A

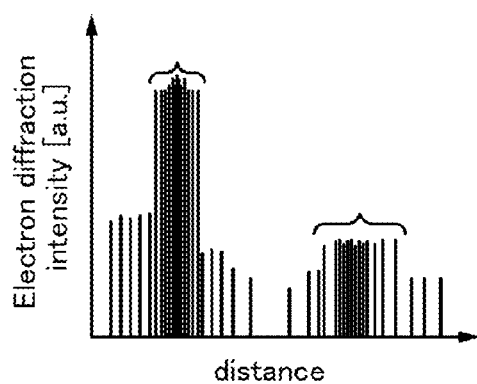


FIG. 19B

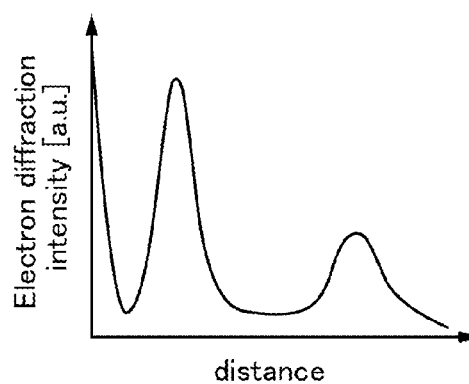


FIG. 19C

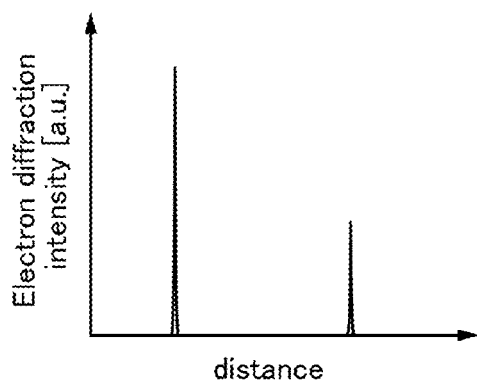


FIG. 20

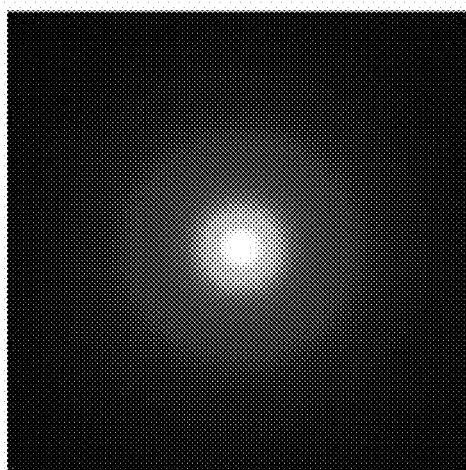


FIG. 21

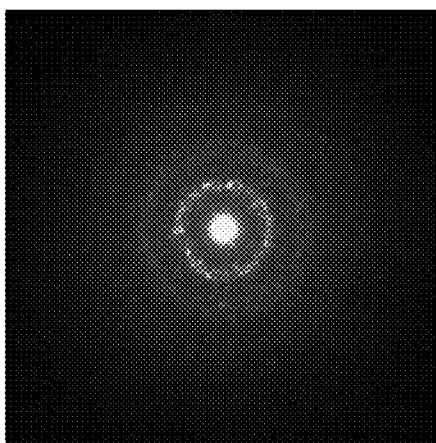


FIG. 22A

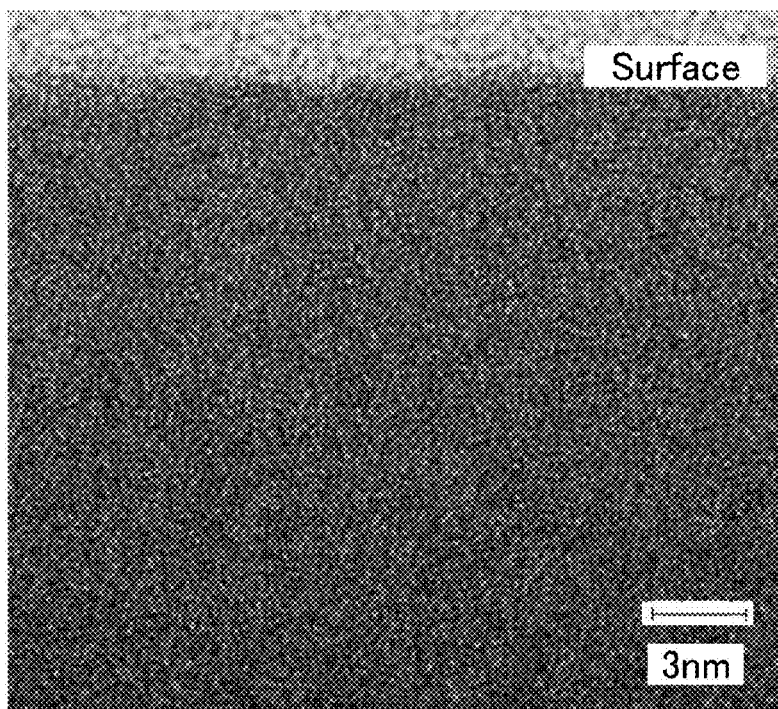


FIG. 22B

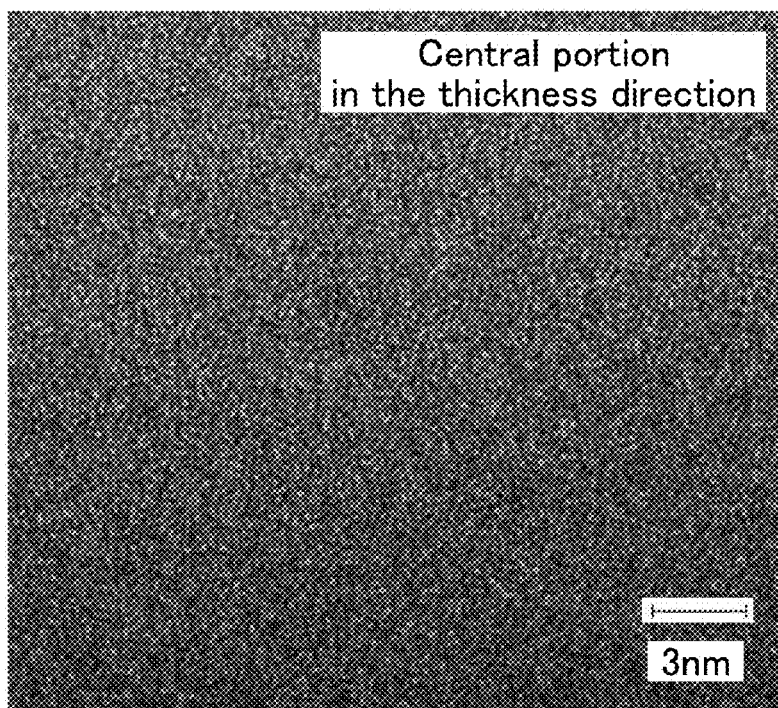


FIG. 23

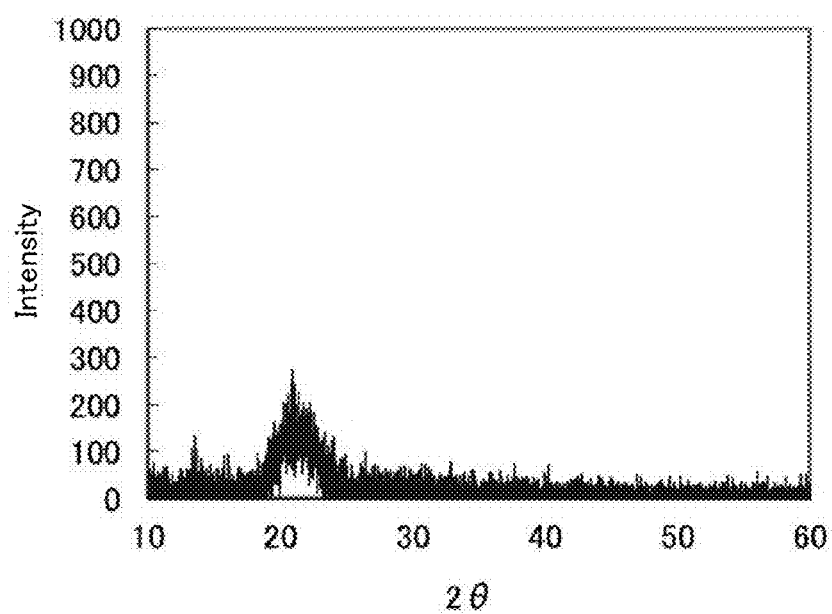


FIG. 24

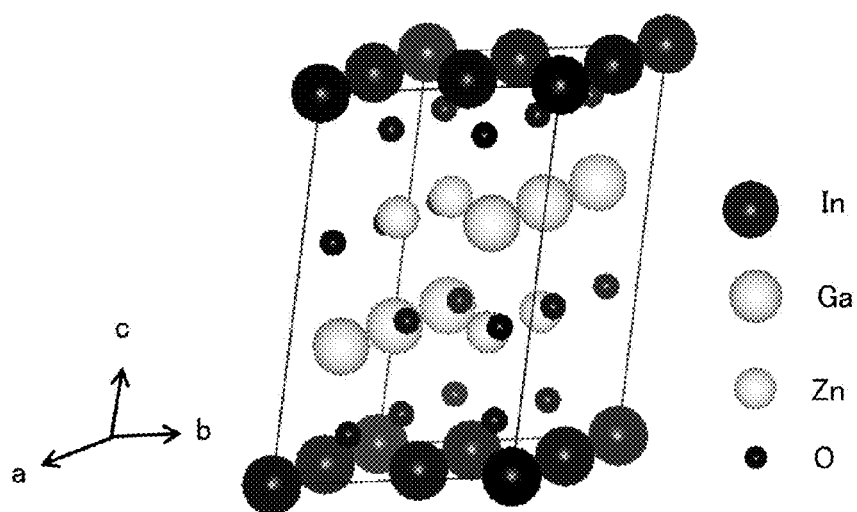


FIG. 25A

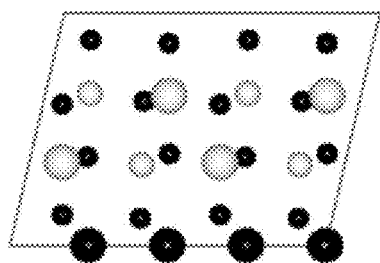


FIG. 25B

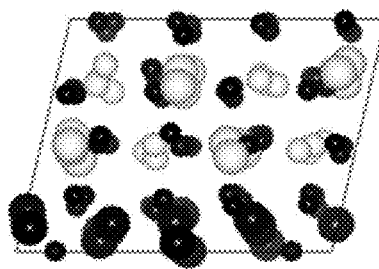


FIG. 25C

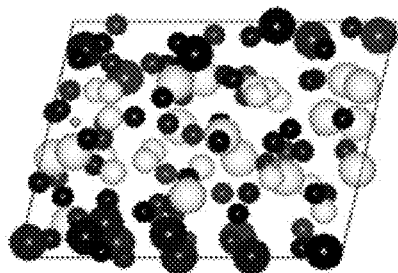


FIG. 25D

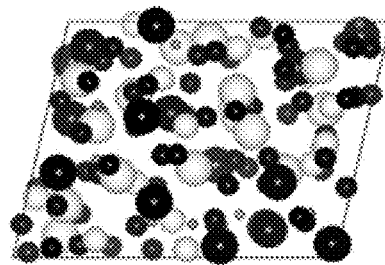


FIG. 26

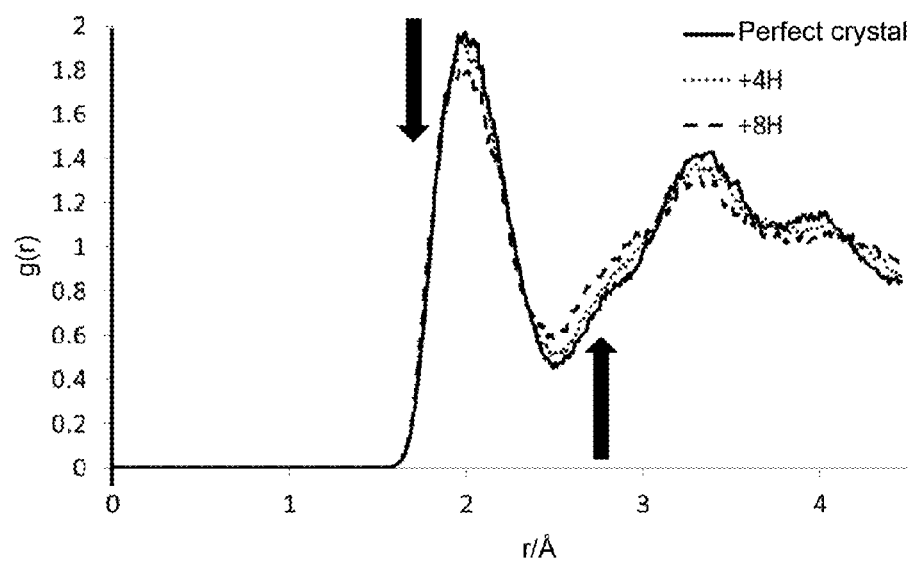


FIG. 27A

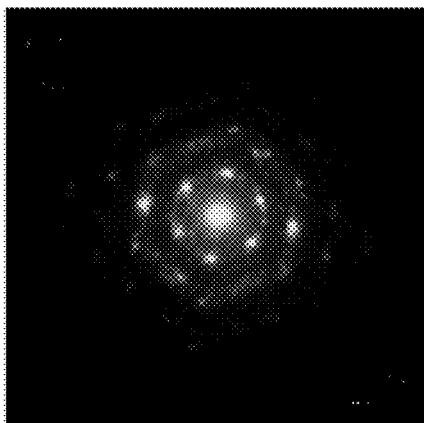


FIG. 27B

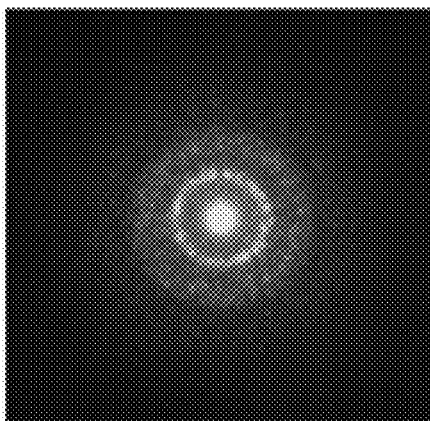


FIG. 27C

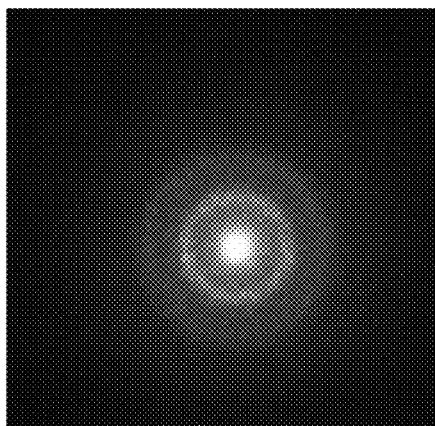


FIG. 28

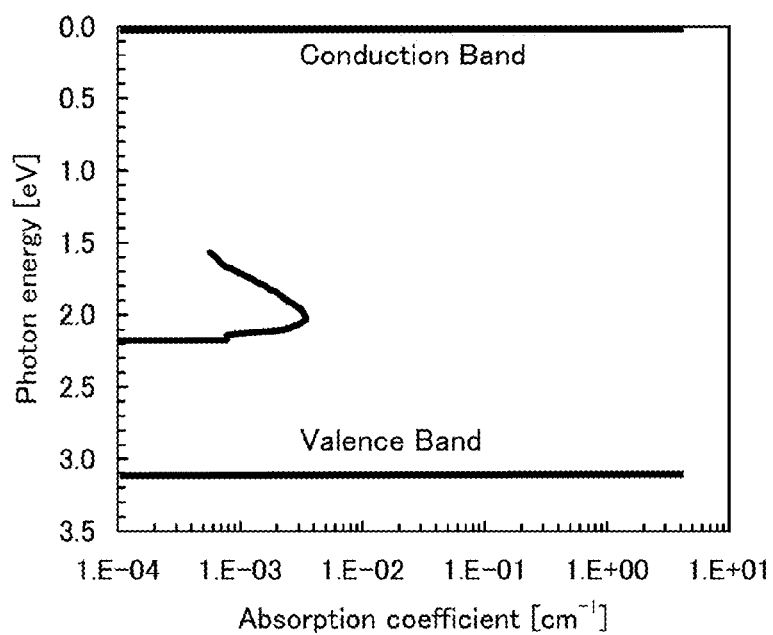


FIG. 29A

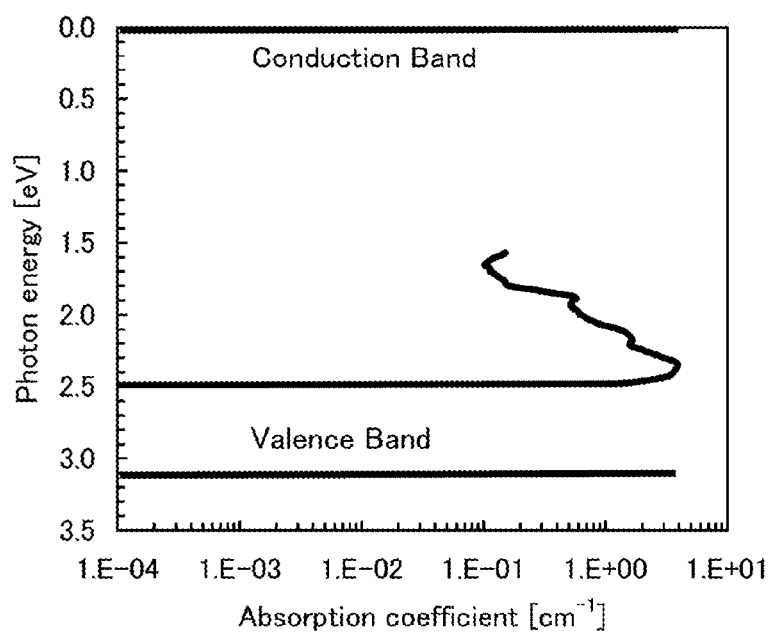
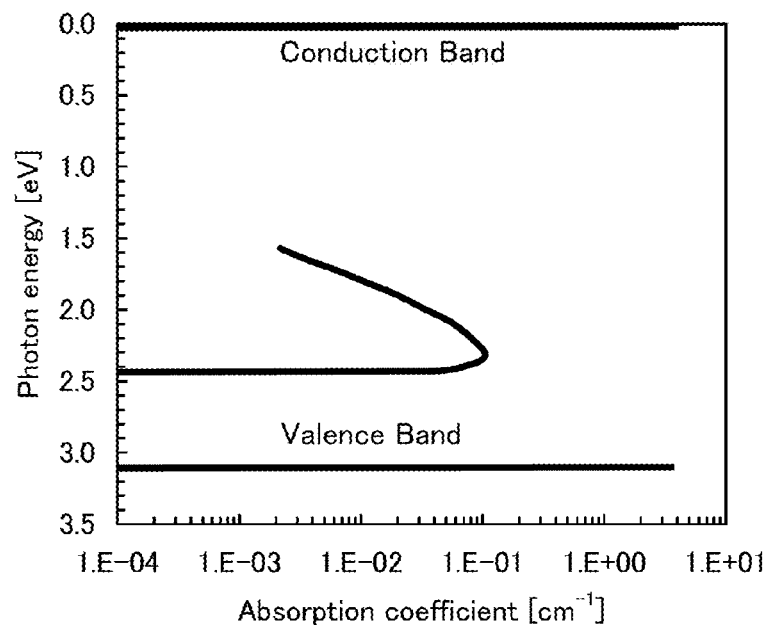


FIG. 29B



1

SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE WITH OXIDE SEMICONDUCTOR

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention disclosed in this specification relates to an object, a method, a manufacturing method, a process, a machine, manufacture, or a composition of matter. In particular, the present invention relates to, for example, a semiconductor device, a display device, a light-emitting device, a power storage device, a driving method thereof, or a manufacturing method thereof. For example, the present invention relates to a semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor, a display device including an oxide semiconductor, or a light-emitting device including an oxide semiconductor.

In this specification and the like, a “semiconductor device” generally refers to a device which can function by utilizing semiconductor characteristics: an electro-optical device, a semiconductor circuit, a display device, a light-emitting device, and an electronic device are all included in the category of the semiconductor device.

BACKGROUND ART

A technique by which a transistor is formed using a semiconductor film formed over a substrate having an insulating surface has been attracting attention. The transistor is applied to a wide range of electronic devices such as an integrated circuit (IC) and an image display device (also simply referred to as display device). As a semiconductor film applicable to the transistor, a silicon-based semiconductor material is widely known; moreover, a metal oxide exhibiting semiconductor characteristics (an oxide semiconductor) has been attracting attention as another material.

For example, Patent Document 1 discloses a technique in which a transistor is manufactured using an amorphous oxide containing In, Zn, Ga, Sn, and the like as an oxide semiconductor.

Although a transistor including an oxide semiconductor film can obtain transistor characteristics relatively with ease, the oxide semiconductor film is likely to be amorphous and has unstable physical properties. Thus, it is difficult to secure reliability of such a transistor.

On the other hand, there is a report that a transistor including a crystalline oxide semiconductor film has more excellent electrical characteristics and higher reliability than a transistor including an amorphous oxide semiconductor film (see Non-Patent Document 1).

REFERENCE

Patent Document

[Patent Document 1] Japanese Published Patent Application No. 2006-165529

Non-Patent Document

[Non-Patent Document 1] Shunpei Yamazaki, Jun Koyama, Yoshitaka Yamamoto, and Kenji Okamoto, “Research, Development, and Application of Crystalline Oxide Semiconductor”, *SID 2012 DIGEST*, pp. 183-186

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

An object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a highly reliable semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor.

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Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a transistor or the like having a low off-state current. Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a transistor or the like having normally-off characteristics. Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a transistor or the like whose threshold voltage is less likely to vary or deteriorate. Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a semiconductor device or the like with low power consumption. Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide an eye-friendly display device or the like. Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a semiconductor device or the like including a transparent semiconductor layer. Another object of one embodiment of the present invention is to provide a novel semiconductor device or the like.

Note that the descriptions of these objects do not disturb the existence of other objects. Note that one embodiment of the present invention does not necessarily achieve all the objects. Other objects will be apparent from and can be derived from the description of the specification, the drawings, the claims, and the like.

One embodiment of the disclosed invention is a semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor layer and an insulating layer in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer. The oxide semiconductor layer includes a first region having a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm and a second region which overlaps with the insulating layer with the first region provided therebetween and which includes a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of the surface of the oxide semiconductor layer. Specifically, one embodiment of the disclosed invention is, for example, a semiconductor device having any of the following structures.

One embodiment of the present invention is a semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor layer, an insulating layer in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer, a gate electrode layer overlapping with the oxide semiconductor layer, and a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer electrically connected to the oxide semiconductor layer. The oxide semiconductor layer includes a first region having a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm and a second region which overlaps with the insulating layer with the first region provided therebetween and which includes a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of the surface of the oxide semiconductor layer.

In the above semiconductor device, oxide semiconductors included in the first region and the second region may have different compositions.

Another embodiment of the present invention is a semiconductor device including a first insulating layer, an oxide semiconductor layer over the first insulating layer, a second insulating layer over the oxide semiconductor layer, a gate electrode layer overlapping with the oxide semiconductor layer, and a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer electrically connected to the oxide semiconductor layer. The oxide semiconductor layer includes a first region having a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm, a second region which overlaps with the first insulating layer with the first region provided therebetween and which includes a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of the surface of the oxide semiconductor layer, and a third region which is located between the second region and the second insulating layer and which has a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm.

In the above semiconductor device, oxide semiconductors included in the first region and the second region may have

different compositions, and oxide semiconductors included in the second region and the third region may have different compositions.

In the above semiconductor device, in the third region, in some cases, a plurality of circumferentially distributed spots are observed by nanobeam electron diffraction in which a diameter of an electron beam is reduced to 1 nm ϕ or more and 10 nm ϕ or less, and a halo pattern is observed by selected-area electron diffraction using a transmission electron microscope where a diameter of an electron beam is 300 nm ϕ or more.

Further, in the above semiconductor device, in the first region, in some cases, a plurality of circumferentially distributed spots are observed by nanobeam electron diffraction in which a diameter of an electron beam is reduced to 1 nm ϕ or more and 10 nm ϕ or less, and a halo pattern is observed by selected-area electron diffraction using a transmission electron microscope where a diameter of an electron beam is 300 nm ϕ or less.

Moreover, in the above semiconductor device, a film density of the second region is preferably higher than a film density of the first region.

In the above semiconductor device, a channel is preferably formed in the second region.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a highly reliable semiconductor device can be provided.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1A to 1C are schematic views each exemplifying a stacked-layer structure of a semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 2A and 2B are schematic views illustrating sputtered particles separated from a sputtering target.

FIGS. 3A, 3B1 and 3B2, and 3C are diagrams describing a discharge state when sputtering is performed using an AC power source.

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram illustrating a state in which sputtered particles reach a deposition surface at the substrate heating.

FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating a state in which sputtered particles reach a deposition surface at the deposition at room temperature.

FIGS. 6A and 6B each illustrate a crystal structure of an oxide semiconductor of one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 7A and 7B are flow charts exemplifying a method for manufacturing a sputtering target.

FIGS. 8A and 8B are a schematic view exemplifying a stacked-layer structure of a semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention and a band structure thereof.

FIGS. 9A to 9C each illustrate a structure example of a transistor of one embodiment.

FIGS. 10A to 10D illustrate an example of a method for manufacturing a transistor of one embodiment.

FIGS. 11A and 11B each illustrate a structure example of a transistor of one embodiment.

FIGS. 12A and 12B are circuit diagrams each illustrating a semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 13A to 13C are circuit diagrams and a conceptual diagram of a semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. 14A to 14C illustrate a structure of a display panel of one embodiment.

FIG. 15 is a block diagram of an electronic device of one embodiment.

FIGS. 16A to 16D are each an external view of an electronic device of one embodiment.

FIGS. 17A to 17D show a cross-sectional TEM image and nanobeam electron diffraction patterns of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer.

FIGS. 18A and 18B show a plane TEM image and a selected-area electron diffraction pattern of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer.

FIGS. 19A to 19C are conceptual diagrams of electron diffraction intensity distribution.

FIG. 20 shows a nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of a quartz glass substrate.

FIG. 21 shows a nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer.

FIGS. 22A and 22B show cross-sectional TEM images of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer.

FIG. 23 shows the result of X-ray diffraction analysis of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer.

FIG. 24 shows a crystal structure of an oxide semiconductor layer used for calculation.

FIGS. 25A to 25D show the calculation results of an influence of hydrogen addition on a crystal state.

FIG. 26 shows the calculation result of a radial distribution function.

FIGS. 27A to 27C show nanobeam electron diffraction patterns of an oxide semiconductor layer obtained with a nanobeam electron beam.

FIG. 28 shows the result of CPM measurement performed on an oxide semiconductor layer.

FIGS. 29A and 29B each show the result of CPM measurement performed on an oxide semiconductor layer.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Embodiments and examples of the present invention are described in detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings. However, the present invention is not limited to the description below, and it is easily understood by those skilled in the art that modes and aspects thereof can be modified in various ways. Therefore, the present invention is not construed as being limited to description of the embodiments and examples.

Note that in each drawing described in this specification, the size, the film thickness, or the region of each component is exaggerated for clarity in some cases. Therefore, the scale is not necessarily limited to that illustrated in the drawings.

Note that the ordinal numbers such as "first" and "second" in this specification and the like are used for convenience and do not denote the order of steps, the stacking order of layers, or the like. In addition, the ordinal numbers in this specification and the like do not denote particular names which specify the present invention.

In this specification and the like, a term "parallel" indicates that the angle formed between two straight lines is greater than or equal to -10° and less than or equal to 10° , and accordingly also includes the case where the angle is greater than or equal to -5° and less than or equal to 5° . In addition, a term "perpendicular" indicates that the angle formed between two straight lines is greater than or equal to 80° and less than or equal to 100° , and accordingly includes the case where the angle is greater than or equal to 85° and less than or equal to 95° .

In this specification and the like, the trigonal and rhombohedral crystal systems are included in the hexagonal crystal system.

[Embodiment 1]

In this embodiment, an oxide semiconductor layer included in a semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to FIGS. 1A to 1C.

<Stacked-Layer Structure of Oxide Semiconductor Layer>

FIG. 1A is a schematic view exemplifying a stacked-layer structure of a semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention. The semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention includes an oxide semiconductor layer **104** in contact with a top surface of an insulating layer **102**.

The oxide semiconductor layer **104** includes a first region **104a** and a second region **104b** overlapping with the insulating layer **102** with the first region **104a** provided therebetween.

In the oxide semiconductor layer **104**, both the first region **104a** and the second region **104b** are crystalline regions and have different crystallinity. Specifically, crystallinity of the second region **104b** is higher than that of the first region **104a**.

As a crystalline oxide semiconductor, for example, a single crystal oxide semiconductor, a c-axis aligned crystalline oxide semiconductor (CAAC-OS), an oxide semiconductor including a polycrystal (hereinafter referred to as a polycrystalline oxide semiconductor), and an oxide semiconductor including a microcrystal (also referred to as a nanocrystal) (hereinafter referred to as a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor) can be given.

In the oxide semiconductor layer **104** of this embodiment, the first region **104a** preferably includes a crystal (nanocrystal (nc)) whose size is greater than or equal to 1 nm and less than or equal to 10 nm, for example.

The nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is a dense film whose film density is higher than that of an amorphous oxide semiconductor film. Thus, in the oxide semiconductor layer **104**, the density of defect states of the first region **104a** including a nanocrystal is lower than that of an amorphous oxide semiconductor film.

Note that in this specification, an amorphous oxide semiconductor film has disordered atomic arrangement and no crystalline component. A typical example thereof is an oxide semiconductor film in which no crystal part exists even in a microscopic region, and the whole of the film is amorphous.

The second region **104b** preferably includes a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of a surface over which the oxide semiconductor layer **104** is formed or a normal vector of a surface of the oxide semiconductor layer **104**. An example of such an oxide semiconductor film is a CAAC-OS film.

The CAAC-OS film is one of oxide semiconductor films including a plurality of crystal parts, and most of the crystal parts each fit inside a cube whose one side is less than 100 nm. Thus, there is a case where a crystal part included in the CAAC-OS film fits inside a cube whose one side is less than 10 nm, less than 5 nm, or less than 3 nm. In a transmission electron microscope (TEM) image of the CAAC-OS film, a boundary between crystal parts, that is, a grain boundary is not clearly observed. Thus, in the CAAC-OS film, a reduction in electron mobility due to the grain boundary is less likely to occur.

According to the TEM image of the CAAC-OS film observed in a direction substantially parallel to a sample surface (cross-sectional TEM image), metal atoms are arranged in a layered manner in the crystal parts. Each metal atom layer has a morphology reflected by a surface over which the CAAC-OS film is formed (hereinafter a surface over which the CAAC-OS film is formed is referred to as a

formation surface) or a top surface of the CAAC-OS film, and is arranged in parallel to the formation surface or the top surface of the CAAC-OS film.

On the other hand, according to the TEM image of the CAAC-OS film observed in a direction substantially perpendicular to the sample surface (plan TEM image), metal atoms are arranged in a triangular or hexagonal configuration in the crystal parts. However, there is no regularity of arrangement of metal atoms between different crystal parts.

From the results of the cross-sectional TEM image and the plan TEM image, alignment is found in the crystal parts in the CAAC-OS film.

A CAAC-OS film is subjected to structural analysis with an X-ray diffraction (XRD) apparatus. For example, when the CAAC-OS film including an InGaZnO₄ crystal is analyzed by an out-of-plane method, a peak appears frequently when the diffraction angle (2 θ) is around 31°. This peak is derived from the (009) plane of the InGaZnO₄ crystal, which indicates that crystals in the CAAC-OS film have c-axis alignment, and that the c-axes are aligned in a direction substantially perpendicular to the formation surface or the top surface of the CAAC-OS film.

On the other hand, when the CAAC-OS film is analyzed by an in-plane method in which an X-ray enters a sample in a direction substantially perpendicular to the c-axis, a peak appears frequently when 2 θ is around 56°. This peak is derived from the (110) plane of the InGaZnO₄ crystal. Here, analysis (ϕ scan) is performed under conditions where the sample is rotated around a normal vector of a sample surface as an axis (ϕ axis) with 2 θ fixed at around 56°. In the case where the sample is a single crystal oxide semiconductor film of InGaZnO₄, six peaks appear. The six peaks are derived from crystal planes equivalent to the (110) plane. On the other hand, in the case of a CAAC-OS film, a peak is not clearly observed even when ϕ scan is performed with 2 θ fixed at around 56°.

According to the above results, in the CAAC-OS film having c-axis alignment, while the directions of a-axes and b-axes are different between crystal parts, the c-axes are aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of a formation surface or a normal vector of a top surface. Thus, each metal atom layer arranged in a layered manner observed in the cross-sectional TEM image corresponds to a plane parallel to the a-b plane of the crystal.

Note that the crystal part is formed concurrently with deposition of the CAAC-OS film or is formed through crystallization treatment such as heat treatment. As described above, the c-axis of the crystal is aligned with a direction parallel to a normal vector of a formation surface or a normal vector of a top surface. Thus, for example, in the case where a shape of the CAAC-OS film is changed by etching or the like, the c-axis might not be necessarily parallel to a normal vector of a formation surface or a normal vector of a top surface of the CAAC-OS film.

Further, the degree of crystallinity in the CAAC-OS film is not necessarily uniform. For example, in the case where crystal growth leading to the CAAC-OS film occurs from the vicinity of the top surface of the film, the degree of the crystallinity in the vicinity of the top surface is in some cases higher than that in the vicinity of the formation surface. Further, when an impurity is added to the CAAC-OS film, the crystallinity in a region to which the impurity is added is changed, and the degree of crystallinity in the CAAC-OS film varies depending on regions.

Note that when the CAAC-OS film with an InGaZnO₄ crystal is analyzed by an out-of-plane method, a peak of 2 θ may also be observed at around 36°, in addition to the peak of

20 at around 31°. The peak of 20 at around 36° indicates that a crystal having no c-axis alignment is included in part of the CAAC-OS film. It is preferable that in the CAAC-OS film, a peak of 20 appear at around 31° and a peak of 20 do not appear at around 36°.

The CAAC-OS film is a dense film whose film density is much higher than that of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film. Thus, in the oxide semiconductor layer 104, the density of defect states of the second region 104b including a CAAC-OS is lower than that of the first region 104a including a nanocrystal.

The oxide semiconductor layer 104 shown in this embodiment includes the first region 104a including a nanocrystal which is an oxide semiconductor in which defect state density is reduced, and the second region 104b including a CAAC-OS which is an oxide semiconductor in which density of defect states is much lower than that of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor.

In a semiconductor device including an oxide semiconductor layer, it is necessary to reduce defect states of the oxide semiconductor layer that functions as a channel and the interface thereof so that the reliability can be improved. In a transistor including an oxide semiconductor layer, a shift of threshold voltage in the negative direction occurs particularly because of defect states due to oxygen vacancies in the oxide semiconductor layer that functions as a channel and oxygen vacancies in the interface thereof.

Thus, with the use of the oxide semiconductor layer 104 including a region in which defects states are reduced for a transistor as shown in this embodiment, a change in electrical characteristics of the transistor due to irradiation of visible light or ultraviolet light can be suppressed. Therefore, the reliability of the transistor can be improved.

In the case where the oxide semiconductor layer 104 is used for a transistor, it is preferable to use the second region 104b including a CAAC-OS in which defect states are further reduced for a main current path (channel) of the transistor. Moreover, in the case where the second region 104b functions as a main current path of the transistor, the structure in which the first region 104a is provided at the interface between the insulating layer 102 and the second region 104b has an effect of suppressing formation of a defect state at the interface between the channel and the insulating layer 102.

Further, even when the second region 104b functions as a main current path in the oxide semiconductor layer 104, a certain amount of current sometimes flows also in the first region 104a. Since the first region 104a of the oxide semiconductor layer 104 shown in this embodiment also includes a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor in which defect state density is lower, the reliability can be improved as compared to the case where the first region 104a includes an amorphous oxide semiconductor.

Note that a stacked-layer structure of the semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention is not limited to the structure of FIG. 1A. For example, a structure in which an insulating layer 106 is provided over an oxide semiconductor layer 114 as illustrated in FIG. 1B may be employed.

In FIG. 1B, the oxide semiconductor layer 114 under the insulating layer 106 includes a first region 114a including a nanocrystal over a second region 114b including a CAAC-OS. In other words, in FIG. 1B, the oxide semiconductor layer 114 includes the first region 114a and the second region 114b overlapping with the insulating layer 106 with the first region 114a provided therebetween in a manner similar to that of FIG. 1A.

Alternatively, as illustrated in FIG. 1C, a structure including an oxide semiconductor layer 124 over the insulating layer 102 and the insulating layer 106 over the oxide semiconductor layer 124 may have a stacked-layer structure in which the oxide semiconductor layer 124 includes a first region 124a including a nanocrystal, a second region 124b overlapping with the insulating layer 102 with the first region 124a provided therebetween and including a CAAC-OS, and a third region 124c being located between the second region 124b and the insulating layer 106 and including a nanocrystal.

The oxide semiconductor layer 114 in FIG. 1B and the oxide semiconductor layer 124 in FIG. 1C as well as the oxide semiconductor layer 104 in FIG. 1A are each an oxide semiconductor layer which includes a region including a nanocrystal and a region including a CAAC-OS and in which defect states are reduced. Thus, with the use of such an oxide semiconductor layer for a transistor, a highly reliable transistor in which a change in electrical characteristics is suppressed can be provided.

Further, as well as the stacked-layer structure in FIG. 1A, the stacked-layer structure in FIG. 1B includes the first region 114a including a nanocrystal provided between the second region 114b including a CAAC-OS and the insulating layer 106. Similarly, the stacked-layer structure in FIG. 1C includes the first region 124a including a nanocrystal provided between the second region 124b including a CAAC-OS and the insulating layer 102 and the third region 124c including a nanocrystal provided between the second region 124b including a CAAC-OS and the insulating layer 106. With such structures, in the case where the second region 114b functions as a channel in a transistor including the oxide semiconductor layer 114, direct contact between the channel and the insulating layer 106 in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 114 can be suppressed; and in the case where the second region 124b functions as a channel in a transistor including the oxide semiconductor layer 124, direct contact between the channel and the insulating layer 106 or the insulating layer 102 in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 124 can be suppressed. Accordingly, in each case, a defect state can be prevented from being formed at the interface of the channel. Thus, the reliability of the transistors can be improved.

Note that the oxide semiconductor layers 104, 114, and 124 illustrated in FIGS. 1A, 1B, and 1C, respectively, may each include a single crystal region or an amorphous region.

For example, in FIG. 1A, the oxide semiconductor layer 104 may include an amorphous region over the second region 104b. Alternatively, in FIG. 1B, the oxide semiconductor layer 114 may include an amorphous region under the second region 114b.

The first region 104a and the second region 104b included in the oxide semiconductor layer 104 in FIG. 1A may each have a structure in which a single-layer film includes regions having different crystallinity or a structure in which films having different crystallinity are stacked. In other words, in this specification and the like, a term "region" can be alternatively referred to as a "layer" unless otherwise described. For example, the oxide semiconductor layer 104 may have a stacked-layer structure of a first oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal and a second oxide semiconductor layer including a CAAC-OS.

Note that in the case where the oxide semiconductor layer 104 has a stacked-layer structure of the first oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal and the second oxide semiconductor layer including a CAAC-OS, metal elements included in the first oxide semiconductor layer and the second oxide semiconductor layer may be the same or different.

Alternatively, in the case where the same metal elements are included, the compositions thereof may be the same or different. The same applies to the oxide semiconductor layer **114** and the oxide semiconductor layer **124**.

The oxide semiconductor layers shown in this embodiment each include a region including a nanocrystal at the interface between an insulating layer and a region including a CAAC-OS that functions as a main current path. Thus, the reliability of the transistors including the oxide semiconductor layers can be improved.

Note that although the oxide semiconductor layers shown in this embodiment can be each included in, for example, an active layer of the transistor, an embodiment of the present invention is not limited to such use. The oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment can be included as some of various elements. For example, the oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment can be included as part of a resistor. The resistor can be included in a protection circuit. Alternatively, for example, the oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment can be included as part of an electrode of a capacitor. The capacitor can be included as a storage capacitor in a pixel or a capacitor in a driver circuit. In the case where the oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment is included in a transistor, a capacitor, or a resistor, other oxide semiconductor layers included in these elements may be formed at the same time. Such a case is preferable because the number of process steps can be reduced. Note that in the case where the oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment is included in a capacitor or a resistor, hydrogen or the like can be introduced into the film to lower the resistance value. Accordingly, the resistance value of the oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment can be lowered in such a manner that a film containing hydrogen, such as a silicon nitride film, is made in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer shown in this embodiment.

The methods and structures described in this embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the methods and structures described in the other embodiments.

[Embodiment 2]

In this embodiment, film formation of a crystal part included in the oxide semiconductor layer described in Embodiment 1 will be described with reference to FIGS. 2A and 2B, FIGS. 3A to 3C, FIG. 4, FIG. 5, and FIGS. 6A and 6B. Note that the following model is just a consideration, and an embodiment of the present invention is not limited thereto. <Film Formation Model of Crystal Part>

FIG. 2A is a schematic view illustrating a state in which an ion **1001** collides with a sputtering target **1000** to separate sputtered particles **1002** from the sputtering target **1000** at the deposition of the oxide semiconductor layer. FIGS. 2A and 2B illustrate the case where the sputtered particle **1002** has the shape of a hexagonal cylinder whose hexagonal planes are parallel to an a-b plane or the case where the sputtered particle **1002** has the shape of a triangular prism whose triangular planes are parallel to an a-b plane. In the case where the sputtered particle **1002** has the shape of the hexagonal cylinder, the direction perpendicular to the hexagonal planes is a c-axis direction (see FIG. 2B). Note that the same applies to the case of the shape of a triangular prism. The diameter (equivalent circle diameter) of the plane of the sputtered particle **1002** which is parallel to the a-b plane is approximately greater than or equal to 1 nm and less than or equal to 30 nm or greater than or equal to 1 nm and less than or equal to 10 nm, though it differs depending on the kind of oxide semiconductor to be used. Note that an oxygen cation is used as the ion **1001**. An argon cation may be used in addition to the

oxygen cation. Note that a cation of another rare gas may be used instead of an argon cation.

With the use of an oxygen cation as the ion **1001**, plasma damage at the deposition can be alleviated. Thus, when the ion **1001** collides with the surface of the sputtering target **1000**, a lowering in crystallinity of the sputtering target **1000** can be suppressed or a change of the sputtering target **1000** into an amorphous state can be suppressed.

It is preferable that the separated sputtered particles **1002** be positively charged. However, there is no particular limitation on the timing at which the sputtered particles **1002** are positively charged. Specifically, the sputtered particle **1002** is in some cases positively charged by being exposed to plasma. Alternatively, the sputtered particle **1002** is in some cases positively charged by receiving an electric charge at the collision of the ion **1001**. Further alternatively, the sputtered particle **1002** is in some cases positively charged in such a manner that the ion **1001** which is an oxygen cation is bonded to a side, top, or bottom surface of the sputtered particle **1002**.

In the sputtered particle **1002**, the corners of the polygonal plane are positively charged, whereby positive charges of the hexagonal plane repel each other. Thus, flat-plate shapes of the sputtered particles **1002** can be maintained.

It is preferable to use a direct-current (DC) power source to positively charge the corners of the polygonal plane of the sputtered particle **1002**. Note that a radio frequency (RF) power source or an alternating-current (AC) power source can also be used. Note that it is difficult to use an RF power source for a sputtering apparatus which is capable of performing deposition to a large-sized substrate. In addition, a DC power source is preferred to an AC power source from the viewpoint below.

In the AC power source, adjacent targets alternately have a cathode potential and an anode potential. In a period A shown in FIG. 3A, a target 1 functions as a cathode and a target 2 functions as an anode as illustrated in FIG. 3B1. In a period B shown in FIG. 3A, the target 1 functions as an anode and the target 2 functions as a cathode as illustrated in FIG. 3B2. The total time of the period A and the period B is 20 microseconds to 50 microseconds and the period A and the period B are repeated at a constant frequency.

In the case where the sputtered particle **1002** is positively charged, positive charges in the sputtered particle **1002** repel each other, whereby flat-plate shapes of the sputtered particles **1002** can be maintained. However, in the case where the AC power source is used, there is time during which an electric field is not applied instantaneously; therefore, some charges of the sputtered particle **1002** are lost and the structure of the sputtered particle might be broken (see FIG. 3C). Thus, a DC power source is preferred to an AC power source. <<Deposition of CAAC-OS>>

A state in which sputtered particles are deposited on a deposition surface is described below with reference to FIG. 4. Note that FIG. 4 illustrates the case where deposition is performed in the state where a substrate is heated.

As illustrated in FIG. 4, in the case of substrate heating, one sputtered particle **1002** moves to a region of a deposition surface **1003** where other sputtered particles **1002** have not been deposited yet and migration of the sputtered particle **1002** occurs, whereby the sputtered particle **1002** is bonded to the side of the sputtered particles which are already deposited. In this manner, the sputtered particles **1002** are spread with flat plate planes facing upward. The c-axes of the deposited sputtered particles **1002** are aligned in one direction perpendicular to the deposition surface **1003**; accordingly, a CAAC-OS film is obtained. Moreover, an oxide semiconductor layer

having a uniform thickness and a uniform crystal orientation is formed with an oxide film obtained by the deposition.

The CAAC-OS film obtained by such a mechanism has high crystallinity even on an amorphous surface, an amorphous insulating surface, a surface of an amorphous oxide film, or the like.

<<Deposition of Nanocrystalline Oxide Semiconductor>>

FIG. 5 illustrates a state in which sputtered particles are deposited on a deposition surface in the case where deposition is performed without substrate heating.

According to FIG. 5, in the case without substrate heating (e.g., the case where the substrate temperature is room temperature $\pm 50^{\circ}$ C., preferably room temperature $\pm 10^{\circ}$ C.), the sputtered particles **1002** fall irregularly to the deposition surface **1003**. Thus, the sputtered particles **1002** are deposited randomly also in a region where other sputtered particles **1002** are already deposited. That is, an oxide semiconductor layer obtained by the deposition has neither a uniform thickness nor a uniform crystal orientation. The oxide semiconductor layer obtained in such a manner is an oxide semiconductor layer including a crystal part because the crystallinity of flat plate-like sputtered particles **1002** is maintained to some extent.

As described above, the diameter of the plane of the sputtered particle **1002** which is parallel to the a-b plane is, for example, approximately greater than or equal to 1 nm and less than or equal to 30 nm or greater than or equal to 1 nm and less than or equal to 10 nm, and a crystal part included in the deposited oxide semiconductor layer is smaller than the sputtered particle **1002** in some cases. The oxide semiconductor layer includes a crystal part with a size of, for example, 10 nm or less or 5 nm or less in some cases, which is a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer.

The nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer is macroscopically equivalent to a film having disordered atomic arrangement. For this reason, in some cases, a peak indicating an orientation is not observed in X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis which is performed on a large area of a measurement sample (for example, in which the beam diameter is larger than that of the sputtered particle **1002**). Further, in some cases, an electron diffraction pattern obtained by using an electron beam with a diameter larger than that of the sputtered particle **1002** is a halo pattern. In this case, for example, a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer is measured with an electron beam having a beam diameter much smaller than the sputtered particle **1002**, whereby a spot (bright spot) can be observed in the obtained nanobeam electron diffraction pattern.

Note that the deposition surface **1003** preferably has an insulating property. With the deposition surface **1003** having an insulating property, the sputtered particles **1002** which are deposited on the deposition surface **1003** are less likely to lose positive charges. However, in the case where the deposition rate of the sputtered particles **1002** is less than the rate at which a positive charge is lost, the deposition surface **1003** may have conductivity. Note that the deposition surface **1003** is preferably an amorphous surface or an amorphous insulating surface.

FIG. 6A illustrates a crystal structure of an In—Ga—Zn oxide viewed from a direction parallel to an a-b plane of the crystal. FIG. 6B illustrates the crystal structure after ion collision during sputtering.

For example, cleavage of the crystal included in the In—Ga—Zn oxide occurs between a layer including a gallium atom and/or zinc atom and an oxygen atom, and a layer including a gallium atom and/or zinc atom and an oxygen atom, which are illustrated in FIG. 6B. This is because oxygen

atoms which have negative charges exist in the layer in a close distance from each other. In this manner, the cleavage plane is parallel to the a-b plane.

That is, when an ion collides with the surface of a sputtering target including a crystal grain of an In—Ga—Zn oxide, the crystal included in the In—Ga—Zn oxide is cleaved along a plane parallel to the a-b plane of the crystal, and flat plate-like sputtered particles whose top and bottom surfaces are parallel to the a-b plane are separated from the sputtering target.

Moreover, in the crystal of the In—Ga—Zn oxide illustrated in FIGS. 6A and 6B, metal atoms are arranged in a regular triangular or regular hexagonal configuration when seen from the direction perpendicular to the a-b plane; therefore, the flat plate-like crystal grain is likely to have the shape of a hexagonal cylinder whose regular hexagonal plane has internal angles of 120° .

<Method for Manufacturing Sputtering Target>

A method for manufacturing the above sputtering target is described with reference to FIGS. 7A and 7B.

In FIG. 7A, an oxide powder containing a plurality of metal elements which is used for the sputtering target is manufactured. First, the oxide powder is weighed in a step **S101**.

Here, description is given on the case where an oxide powder containing In, M, and Zn (also referred to as an In-M-Zn oxide powder) is obtained as the oxide powder containing a plurality of metal elements. Specifically, an InO_x oxide powder, an MO_y oxide powder, and a ZnO_z oxide powder are prepared as a raw material. Note that X, Y, and Z are each a given positive number; for example, X, Y, and Z are 1.5, 1.5, and 1, respectively. It is needless to say that the above oxide powders are examples, and oxide powders can be selected as appropriate in order to obtain a desired composition. Note that M refers to Ga, Sn, Hf, Al, La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, or Lu. Although the case where three kinds of oxide powders are used is shown as an example in this embodiment, one embodiment of the present invention is not limited thereto. For example, this embodiment may be applied to the case where four or more kinds of oxide powders are used or the case where one or two kinds of oxide powders are used.

Next, the InO_x oxide powder, the MO_y oxide powder, and the ZnO_z oxide powder are mixed in a predetermined molar ratio.

For example, the predetermined molar ratio of the InO_x oxide powder, the MO_y oxide powder, and the ZnO_z oxide powder is 2:2:1, 8:4:3, 3:1:1, 1:1:1, 4:2:3, 1:1:2, 3:1:4, or 3:1:2. With such a molar ratio, a sputtering target including a polycrystalline oxide with high crystallinity can be obtained easily later.

Next, in a step **S102**, an In-M-Zn oxide is obtained by performing first baking on the InO_x oxide powder, the MO_y oxide powder, and the ZnO_z oxide powder which are mixed in a predetermined molar ratio.

Note that the first baking is performed in an inert atmosphere, an oxidation atmosphere, or under a reduced pressure at a temperature higher than or equal to 400° C. and lower than or equal to 1700° C., preferably higher than or equal to 900° C. and lower than or equal to 1500° C. The first baking is performed for longer than or equal to 3 minutes and shorter than or equal to 24 hours, preferably longer than or equal to 30 minutes and shorter than or equal to 17 hours, further preferably longer than or equal to 30 minutes and shorter than or equal to 5 hours, for example. When the first baking is performed under the above conditions, secondary reactions other than the main reaction can be suppressed, and the impurity

concentration in the In-M-Zn oxide powder can be reduced. Accordingly, the crystallinity of the In-M-Zn oxide powder can be increased.

The first baking may be performed plural times at different temperatures and/or in different atmospheres. For example, the In-M-Zn oxide powder may be first held at a first temperature in a first atmosphere and then at a second temperature in a second atmosphere. Specifically, it is preferable that the first atmosphere be an inert atmosphere or under a reduced pressure and the second atmosphere be an oxidation atmosphere. This is because an oxygen vacancy is generated in some cases in the In-M-Zn oxide when impurities contained in the In-M-Zn oxide powder are reduced in the first atmosphere. Therefore, it is preferable that oxygen vacancies in the obtained In-M-Zn oxide be reduced in the second atmosphere. The impurity concentration and oxygen vacancies in the In-M-Zn oxide are reduced, whereby the crystallinity of the In-M-Zn oxide powder can be increased.

Next, the In-M-Zn oxide powder is obtained by grinding the In-M-Zn oxide in a step S103.

The In-M-Zn oxide has a high proportion of crystals with surface structures of planes parallel to the a-b plane. Therefore, the obtained In-M-Zn oxide powder includes many flat plate-like crystal grains whose top and bottom surfaces are parallel to the a-b plane. Moreover, the crystal of the In-M-Zn oxide has, in many cases, a hexagonal or trigonal (rhombohedral) crystal structure; therefore, in many cases, the above flat plate-like crystal grains each have the shape of a hexagonal cylinder whose top and bottom surfaces are approximately equilateral hexagons each having interior angles of 120°.

Next, the grain size of the obtained In-M-Zn oxide powder is checked in a step S104. Here, the average grain size of the In-M-Zn oxide powder is checked to be less than or equal to 3 μm , preferably less than or equal to 2.5 μm , further preferably less than or equal to 2 μm . Note that the step S104 may be omitted and only the In-M-Zn oxide powder whose grain size is less than or equal to 3 μm , preferably less than or equal to 2.5 μm , further preferably less than or equal to 2 μm may be sifted using a grain size filter. The average grain size of the In-M-Zn oxide powder can be certainly less than or equal to 3 μm , preferably less than or equal to 2.5 μm , further preferably less than or equal to 2 μm by sifting the In-M-Zn oxide powder whose grain size is less than or equal to 3 μm , preferably less than or equal to 2.5 μm , further preferably less than or equal to 2 μm .

In the case where the average grain size of the In-M-Zn oxide powder exceeds a predetermined size in the step S104, the procedure returns to the step S103 and the In-M-Zn oxide powder is ground again.

In the above manner, the In-M-Zn oxide powder whose average grain size is less than or equal to 3 μm , preferably less than or equal to 2.5 μm , further preferably less than or equal to 2 μm can be obtained. Note that the grain size of a crystal grain included in a sputtering target to be manufactured later can be reduced by obtaining the In-M-Zn oxide powder whose average grain size is less than or equal to 3 μm , preferably less than or equal to 2.5 μm , further preferably less than or equal to 2 μm .

Next, in FIG. 7B, a sputtering target is manufactured using the In-M-Zn oxide powder obtained in the flow chart shown in FIG. 7A.

In a step S111, the In-M-Zn oxide powder is made to spread over a mold and molded. Here, molding refers to making powder or the like spread over a mold to obtain a uniform thickness. Specifically, the In-M-Zn oxide powder is introduced into the mold, and then vibration is externally applied

so that the In-M-Zn oxide powder is molded. Alternatively, the In-M-Zn oxide powder is introduced into the mold, and then molding is performed using a roller or the like so as to obtain a uniform thickness. Note that in the step S111, slurry in which the In-M-Zn oxide powder is mixed with water, a dispersant, and a binder may be molded. In that case, the slurry is poured into the mold and then molded by sucking the mold from the bottom. After that, drying treatment is performed on a molded body after the mold is sucked. The drying treatment is preferably natural drying because the molded body is less likely to be cracked. After that, the molded body is subjected to heat treatment at a temperature higher than or equal to 300° C. and lower than or equal to 700° C., so that residual moisture or the like which cannot be taken out by natural drying is removed.

When the In-M-Zn oxide powder including many flat plate-like crystal grains whose top and bottom surfaces are parallel to the a-b plane is made to spread over the mold and molded, the crystal grains are arranged with the planes which are parallel to the a-b plane thereof facing upward. Therefore, the proportion of the surface structures of planes parallel to the a-b plane can be increased in such a manner that the obtained In-M-Zn oxide powder is made to spread over the mold and molded. Note that the mold may be formed of a metal or an oxide and the upper shape thereof is rectangular or rounded.

Next, in a step S112, second baking is performed on the In-M-Zn oxide powder. Then, first pressure treatment is performed on the In-M-Zn oxide powder which has been subjected to the second baking, whereby plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is obtained in a step S113. The second baking is performed under conditions similar to those of the first baking. The crystallinity of the In-M-Zn oxide can be increased by performing the second baking.

Note that the first pressure treatment may be performed in any manner as long as the In-M-Zn oxide powder can be pressed. For example, a weight which is formed of the same kind of material as the mold can be used. Alternatively, the In-M-Zn oxide powder may be pressed under a high pressure using compressed air. Besides, the first pressure treatment can be performed using various known techniques. Note that the first pressure treatment may be performed at the same time as the second baking.

Planarization treatment may be performed after the first pressure treatment. As the planarization treatment, chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) treatment or the like can be employed.

The plate-like In-M-Zn oxide thus obtained becomes a polycrystalline oxide with high crystallinity.

Next, the thickness of the obtained plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is checked in a step S114. When the thickness of the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is less than a desired thickness, the procedure returns to the step S111 and the In-M-Zn oxide powder is made to spread over the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide and molded. When the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide has a desired thickness, the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is used as a sputtering target. The description of the case where the thickness of the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is less than a desired thickness is given below.

Next, in the step S112, third baking is performed on the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide and the In-M-Zn oxide powder over the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide. Then, in the step S113, second pressure treatment is performed on the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide and the In-M-Zn oxide powder over the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide which have been subjected to the third baking, whereby a plate-like In-M-Zn oxide whose thickness is increased by the thickness of the In-M-Zn oxide powder is

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obtained. A plate-like In-M-Zn oxide with an increased thickness is obtained through crystal growth with the use of the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide as a seed crystal; therefore, the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is a polycrystalline oxide with high crystallinity.

Note that the third baking is performed under conditions similar to those of the second baking. The second pressure treatment is performed under conditions similar to those of the first pressure treatment. Note that the second pressure treatment may be performed at the same time as the third baking.

The thickness of the obtained plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is checked again in the step S114.

Through the above steps, the thickness of the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide can be gradually increased while the crystal alignment is improved.

By repeating these steps of increasing the thickness of a plate-like In-M-Zn oxide n times (n is a natural number), the plate-like In-M-Zn oxide having a desired thickness (t), for example, greater than or equal to 2 mm and less than or equal to 20 mm, preferably greater than or equal to 3 mm and less than or equal to 20 mm can be obtained. The plate-like In-M-Zn oxide is used as a sputtering target.

After that, planarization treatment may be performed.

Note that fourth baking may be performed on the obtained sputtering target. The fourth baking is performed under conditions similar to those of the first baking. A sputtering target including a polycrystalline oxide with much higher crystallinity can be obtained by performing the fourth baking.

In the above manner, the sputtering target which includes a polycrystalline In—Zn oxide containing a plurality of crystal grains having cleavage planes parallel to the a - b plane and a small average grain size can be manufactured.

Note that the sputtering target formed in such a manner can have high density. When the density of the sputtering target is increased, the density of a film to be formed can also be increased. Specifically, the relative density of the sputtering target can be set to 90% or higher, preferably 95% or higher, further preferably 99% or higher.

The methods and structures described in this embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the methods and structures described in the other embodiments. [Embodiment 3]

In this embodiment, another example of the stacked-layer structure of the semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to FIGS. 8A and 8B. Specifically, in this embodiment, the case in which the oxide semiconductor layer described in Embodiment 1 has a stacked-layer structure of a first oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal, a second oxide semiconductor layer including a CAAC-OS, and a third oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal is given as an example.

FIG. 8A is a cross-sectional view of oxide semiconductor layers between insulating layers. FIG. 8B shows a band structure along line X1-Y1 in FIG. 8A.

The stacked-layer structure of this embodiment includes an oxide semiconductor layer 404 between an insulating layer 402 and an insulating layer 410, and the oxide semiconductor layer 404 includes a first oxide semiconductor layer 404a, a second oxide semiconductor layer 404b, and a third oxide semiconductor layer 404c.

As the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b included in the oxide semiconductor layer 404, an oxide semiconductor layer including a CAAC-OS is used. Further, as the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b, an oxide semiconductor layer having higher electron affinity than the first oxide semi-

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conductor layer 404a and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c is used. For example, as the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b, an oxide semiconductor layer having higher electron affinity than the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c by greater than or equal to 0.07 eV and less than or equal to 1.3 eV, preferably greater than or equal to 0.1 eV and less than or equal to 0.7 eV, further preferably greater than or equal to 0.15 eV and less than or equal to 0.4 eV is used.

Note that the electron affinity refers to an energy difference between the vacuum level and the conduction band minimum. In FIG. 8B, the conduction band minimum energy of the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a, that of the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b, and that of the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c are denoted by E_{c1} , E_{c2} , and E_{c3} , respectively. The valence band maximum energy of the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a, that of the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b, and that of the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c are denoted by E_{v1} , E_{v2} , and E_{v3} , respectively.

At least as one of the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c included in the oxide semiconductor layer 404, an oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal is used. In this embodiment, an oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal is used as both of the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c.

Moreover, for the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c, an oxide semiconductor layer whose energy gap is larger than an energy gap E_{g2} of the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b is used. For example, an energy gap E_{g1} of the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a and an energy gap E_{g3} of the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c are greater than or equal to 2.7 eV and less than or equal to 4.9 eV, preferably greater than or equal to 3 eV and less than or equal to 4.7 eV, further preferably greater than or equal to 3.2 eV and less than or equal to 4.4 eV. Note that the energy gap E_{g2} of the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b is smaller than the energy gaps E_{g1} and E_{g3} , for example, greater than or equal to 2.5 eV and less than or equal to 4.2 eV, preferably greater than or equal to 2.8 eV and less than or equal to 3.8 eV, further preferably greater than or equal to 3 eV and less than or equal to 3.5 eV.

When an electric field is applied to a gate electrode layer in such a structure, the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b of the oxide semiconductor layer 404 whose conduction band minimum energy is the lowest serves as a main current path. In other words, the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a is formed between the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b and the insulating layer 402 and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c is formed between the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b and the insulating layer 410, whereby a structure in which a channel of a transistor is not in contact with a gate insulating layer can be obtained.

The second oxide semiconductor layer 404b has higher film density and a lower defect state density than the first oxide semiconductor layer 404a and the third oxide semiconductor layer 404c. Thus, it is possible to suppress a change in electrical characteristics of the transistor due to defect states by formation of a channel in the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b; accordingly, a highly reliable transistor can be obtained.

Further, an oxide semiconductor layer with low carrier density is used as the second oxide semiconductor layer 404b. For example, an oxide semiconductor layer whose carrier density is lower than or equal to $1 \times 10^{17}/\text{cm}^3$, preferably lower than or equal to $1 \times 10^{15}/\text{cm}^3$, further preferably lower than or

equal to $1 \times 10^{13}/\text{cm}^3$, still further preferably lower than or equal to $1 \times 10^{11}/\text{cm}^3$ is used as the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**.

The second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** contains at least indium. The second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** preferably contains at least indium in order that the carrier mobility (electron mobility) is high. In addition to indium, an element M (aluminum, gallium, yttrium, zirconium, or tin) is preferably contained.

The first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** contains one or more kinds of elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**. Further, since the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** contains one or more kinds of elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**, interface scattering is less likely to occur at the interface between the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** and the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a**. Thus, the transistor can have a high field-effect mobility because the movement of carriers is not hindered at the interface.

The first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** may contain a larger amount of, for example, aluminum, titanium, silicon, gallium, germanium, yttrium, zirconium, tin, lanthanum, cerium, or hafnium in an atomic ratio than that of indium in an atomic ratio. Specifically, the amount of any of the above elements in the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** in an atomic ratio is 1.5 times or more, preferably 2 times or more, further preferably 3 times or more as large as that of indium in an atomic ratio. The above elements increase the energy gap of the oxide semiconductor layer in some cases. When a large amount of any of the above elements in an atomic ratio is contained in the oxide semiconductor layer, it decreases the electron affinity of the oxide semiconductor layer in some cases. Any of the above elements is more strongly bonded to oxygen than indium is, and thus has a function of suppressing generation of an oxygen vacancy in the oxide semiconductor layer. The above elements block an impurity of the oxide semiconductor layer or reduce the diffusion coefficient of an impurity in some cases. Further, the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** contains a larger amount of any of the above elements in an atomic ratio than that in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** in an atomic ratio.

The third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** contains one or more kinds of elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**. Further, since the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** contains one or more kinds of elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**, interface scattering is less likely to occur at the interface between the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c**. Thus, the transistor can have a high field-effect mobility because the movement of carriers is not hindered at the interface.

The third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** may contain a larger amount of, for example, aluminum, titanium, silicon, gallium, germanium, yttrium, zirconium, tin, lanthanum, cerium, or hafnium in an atomic ratio than that of indium in an atomic ratio. Specifically, the amount of any of the above elements in the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** in an atomic ratio is 1.5 times or more, preferably 2 times or more, further preferably 3 times or more as large as that of indium in an atomic ratio. Note that the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** contains any of the above elements in a higher atomic ratio than the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**.

Note that the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** may have different physical properties or the same physical properties.

In the case of using an In-M-Zn oxide for the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a**, when Zn and oxygen are elimi-

nated from consideration, the proportion of In and the proportion of M are preferably less than 50 atomic % and greater than or equal to 50 atomic %, respectively, further preferably less than 25 atomic % and greater than or equal to 75 atomic %, respectively. In the case of using an In-M-Zn oxide for the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**, when Zn and oxygen are eliminated from consideration, the proportion of In and the proportion of M are preferably greater than or equal to 25 atomic % and less than 75 atomic %, respectively, further preferably greater than or equal to 34 atomic % and less than 66 atomic %, respectively. In the case of using an In-M-Zn oxide for the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c**, when Zn and oxygen are eliminated from consideration, the proportion of In and the proportion of M are preferably less than 50 atomic % and greater than or equal to 50 atomic %, respectively, further preferably less than 25 atomic % and greater than or equal to 75 atomic %, respectively.

The thickness of the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** is greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 100 nm, preferably greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 50 nm. The thickness of the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** is greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 200 nm, preferably greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 100 nm, further preferably greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 50 nm. The thickness of the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** is greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 100 nm, preferably greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 50 nm.

Since each of the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** contains one or more kinds of metal elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**, the oxide semiconductor layer **404** can also be referred to as an oxide stack in which layers containing the same main components are stacked. The oxide stack in which layers containing the same main components are stacked is formed to have not only a simple stacked-layer structure of the layers but also a continuous energy band (here, in particular, a well structure having a U shape in which the conduction band minimum energies are changed continuously between the layers). This is because when an impurity which forms a defect state such as a trapping center or a recombination center is mixed at an interface between the layers, the continuity of the energy band is lost, and thus carriers are trapped or disappear by recombination at the interface.

In order to form continuous junction, the layers need to be stacked successively without being exposed to the air by using a multi-chamber deposition system (sputtering apparatus) provided with a load lock chamber. It is preferable that each chamber of the sputtering apparatus be able to be evacuated to a high vacuum (to about 5×10^{-7} Pa to 1×10^{-4} Pa) by an adsorption vacuum pump such as a cryopump so that water and the like acting as impurities of the oxide semiconductor are removed as much as possible. Alternatively, a combination of a turbo molecular pump and a cold trap is preferably used to prevent back-flow of a gas from an exhaust system into the chamber.

Not only high vacuum evacuation of the chamber but also high purification of a sputtering gas is necessary to reduce hydrogen and oxygen vacancies that cause defect states in the oxide semiconductor layer and obtain a highly purified intrinsic oxide semiconductor layer. As an oxygen gas or an argon gas used as the sputtering gas, a gas that is highly purified to have a dew point of -40°C . or lower, preferably -80°C . or lower, further preferably -100°C . or lower is used, so that

entry of moisture or the like into the oxide semiconductor can be prevented as much as possible.

Each of the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** which are provided over and under the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** can serve as a barrier layer, and suppress the adverse effect of a defect state which is formed at the interface between the oxide semiconductor layer **404** and each of the insulating layers in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer **404** on the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** which serves as a main carrier path for the transistor.

For example, oxygen vacancies in the oxide semiconductor layer appear as localized states in deep energy area in the energy gap of the oxide semiconductor. A carrier is trapped in such localized states, so that the reliability of the transistor is reduced. For this reason, oxygen vacancies in the oxide semiconductor layer need to be reduced. The oxide semiconductor layers whose compositions are less likely to cause an oxygen vacancy than the composition of the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** are provided over and under and in contact with the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** in the oxide semiconductor layer **404**, whereby oxygen vacancies in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** can be reduced.

In addition, when the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** is in contact with an insulating layer including a different constituent element (e.g., a base insulating layer including a silicon oxide film), an interface state is sometimes formed at the interface of the two layers and the interface state forms a channel. At this time, in some cases, a second transistor having a different threshold voltage is formed and accordingly an apparent threshold voltage of the transistor is fluctuated. However, since the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** contains one or more kinds of metal elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** in the oxide semiconductor layer **404**, an interface state is less likely to be formed at the interface between the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**. Thus, with the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a**, variations in electrical characteristics of the transistors, such as a threshold voltage, can be reduced.

In the case where a channel is formed at the interface between a gate insulating layer (here, assumed to be the insulating layer **410**) and the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**, interface scattering occurs at the interface and the field-effect mobility of the transistor is decreased. However, since the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** contains one or more kinds of metal elements contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** in the oxide semiconductor layer **404**, scattering of carriers is less likely to occur at the interface between the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c**, and thus the field-effect mobility of the transistor can be increased.

Further, each of the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** also serves as a barrier layer which suppresses formation of impurity levels due to the entry of the constituent elements of the insulating layers which are in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer **404** into the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**.

For example, in the case of using a silicon-containing insulating layer as each of the insulating layers **402** and **410** which are in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer **404**, the silicon in the insulating layers or carbon which might be contained in the insulating layers in some cases enters the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** or the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** at a depth of several nanometers from the interface. An impurity such as silicon or carbon entering the oxide semiconductor layer forms impurity levels. The impu-

urity levels serve as a donor and generates an electron, so that an n-type region is sometimes formed in the oxide semiconductor layer.

However, when the thicknesses of the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** are larger than several nanometers, the impurity such as silicon or carbon which has entered the oxide semiconductor layer does not reach the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**, so that the influence of impurity levels is suppressed.

Here, the concentration of silicon contained in the oxide semiconductor layer is lower than or equal to $3 \times 10^{18}/\text{cm}^3$, preferably lower than or equal to $3 \times 10^{17}/\text{cm}^3$. In addition, the concentration of carbon contained in the oxide semiconductor layer is lower than or equal to $3 \times 10^{18}/\text{cm}^3$, preferably lower than or equal to $3 \times 10^{17}/\text{cm}^3$. It is particularly preferable to sandwich or surround the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** which serves as a carrier path by the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c** in order to prevent entry of much silicon or carbon which is a Group 14 element into the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b**. That is, the concentrations of silicon and carbon contained in the second oxide semiconductor layer **404b** are preferably lower than those in the first oxide semiconductor layer **404a** and the third oxide semiconductor layer **404c**.

Note that the impurity concentration in the oxide semiconductor layer can be measured by secondary ion mass spectrometry (SIMS).

If hydrogen or moisture is contained in the oxide semiconductor layer as an impurity, it can work as a donor and form an n-type region; therefore, in order to achieve a well-shaped structure, it is useful to provide a protective insulating layer (e.g., a silicon nitride layer) for preventing entry of hydrogen or moisture from the outside into the upper portion of the oxide semiconductor layer **404**.

The methods and structures described in this embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the methods and structures described in the other embodiments.

[Embodiment 4]

In this embodiment, a structure example of a transistor including the oxide semiconductor layer described in Embodiment 1 or 3 will be described with reference to drawings.

<Structure Example of Transistor>

FIG. 9A is a schematic cross-sectional view of a transistor **300**. The transistor **300** exemplified by this structure example is a bottom-gate transistor.

The transistor **300** includes a gate electrode layer **302** provided over a substrate **301**, an insulating layer **303** provided over the substrate **301** and the gate electrode layer **302**, an oxide semiconductor layer **314** provided over the insulating layer **303** to overlap with the gate electrode layer **302**, and a source electrode layer **305a** and a drain electrode layer **305b** which are in contact with the top surface of the oxide semiconductor layer **314**. Moreover, an insulating layer **306** covers the insulating layer **303**, the oxide semiconductor layer **314**, and the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b**; and an insulating layer **307** is provided over the insulating layer **306**.

The oxide semiconductor layer **314** included in the transistor **300** has a stacked-layer structure of an oxide semiconductor layer **314a** and an oxide semiconductor layer **314b**. Note that a boundary between the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** is shown by broken lines in FIG. 9A and the like because the boundary is not clear in some cases.

Both the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** are crystalline oxide semiconductor layers, which have different crystallinity. In this embodiment, for the oxide semiconductor layer **314a**, an oxide semiconductor layer having higher film quality and a lower defect state density than the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** is used. Preferably, the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** is a CAAC-OS film, and the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** is a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer. In other words, the oxide semiconductor layer **314** of the transistor **300** in this embodiment corresponds to the oxide semiconductor layer **114** described in Embodiment 1 with reference to FIG. 1B. The insulating layer **306** of the transistor **300** corresponds to the insulating layer **106** described in Embodiment 1 with reference to FIG. 1B.

Typical examples of a material of the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** are In—Ga oxide, In—Zn oxide, and In-M-Zn oxide (M represents Al, Ti, Ga, Y, Zr, La, Ce, Nd, or Hf). In the case of using an In-M-Zn oxide for the oxide semiconductor layer **314a**, when Zn and oxygen are eliminated from consideration, the proportion of In and the proportion of M are preferably greater than or equal to 25 atomic % and less than 75 atomic %, respectively, further preferably greater than or equal to 34 atomic % and less than 66 atomic %, respectively. In addition, the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** is formed using a material having an energy gap of 2 eV or higher, preferably 2.5 eV or higher, further preferably 3 eV or higher, for example.

In this embodiment, the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** is formed using an oxide semiconductor layer which contains one or more kinds of metal elements contained in the oxide semiconductor layer **314a**. For example, an oxide semiconductor layer that is represented by an In-M-Zn oxide (M is a metal such as Al, Ti, Ga, Ge, Y, Zr, Sn, La, Ce, or Hf) and contains a larger amount of M in an atomic ratio than that in the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** in an atomic ratio is used. Specifically, the amount of the element M in the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** in an atomic ratio is 1.5 times or more, preferably 2 times or more, further preferably 3 times or more as large as that of the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** in an atomic ratio. The element M is more strongly bonded to oxygen than indium is, and thus the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** has a function of suppressing generation of an oxygen vacancy. Thus, an oxygen vacancy can be less likely to be caused in the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** than in the oxide semiconductor layer **314a**.

It is preferable to use, as the oxide semiconductor layer **314b**, an oxide semiconductor which is an In-M-Zn oxide (M represents Al, Ti, Ga, Y, Zr, La, Ce, Nd, or Hf) and whose conduction band minimum is closer to a vacuum level than that of the oxide semiconductor used as the oxide semiconductor layer **314a**. For example, the difference in the conduction band minimum energy between the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** and the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** is preferably 0.05 eV or more, 0.07 eV or more, 0.1 eV or more, or 0.15 eV or more and 2 eV or less, 1 eV or less, 0.5 eV or less, or 0.4 eV or less.

For example, in the case of using an In-M-Zn oxide for the oxide semiconductor layer **314b**, when Zn and oxygen are eliminated from consideration, the proportion of In and the proportion of M are preferably less than 50 atomic % and greater than or equal to 50 atomic %, respectively, further preferably less than 25 atomic % and greater than or equal to 75 atomic %, respectively.

For example, as the oxide semiconductor layer **314a**, an In—Ga—Zn oxide in which an atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:1:1 or 3:1:2 can be used. As the oxide semiconductor

layer **314b**, an In—Ga—Zn oxide in which an atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:3:2, 1:6:4, or 1:9:6 can be used. Note that the atomic ratio of each of the oxide semiconductor layers **314a** and **314b** may vary within a margin of $\pm 20\%$ of the corresponding atomic ratio.

However, the compositions are not limited to those described above, and a material having the appropriate composition may be used depending on required semiconductor characteristics and electrical characteristics of the transistor (e.g., field-effect mobility and threshold voltage). Further, in order to obtain the required semiconductor characteristics of the transistor, it is preferable that the carrier density, the impurity concentration, the defect density, the atomic ratio of a metal element to oxygen, the interatomic distance, the density, and the like of the oxide semiconductor layers **314a** and **314b** be set to appropriate values.

Although the oxide semiconductor layer **314** is a stack of two oxide semiconductor layers in the above structure, it may be a stack of three or more oxide semiconductor layers.

<<Substrate **301**>>

There is no particular limitation on the property of a material and the like of the substrate **301** as long as the material has heat resistance enough to withstand at least heat treatment which will be performed later. For example, a glass substrate, a ceramic substrate, a quartz substrate, a sapphire substrate, or a yttria-stabilized zirconia (YSZ) substrate may be used as the substrate **301**. Alternatively, a single crystal semiconductor substrate or a polycrystalline semiconductor substrate made of silicon, silicon carbide, or the like, a compound semiconductor substrate made of silicon germanium or the like, an SOI substrate, or the like can be used as the substrate **301**. Still alternatively, any of these substrates provided with a semiconductor element may be used as the substrate **301**.

Still alternatively, a flexible substrate such as a plastic substrate may be used as the substrate **301**, and the transistor **300** may be provided directly on the flexible substrate. Further alternatively, a separation layer may be provided between the substrate **301** and the transistor **300**. The separation layer can be used when part or the whole of the transistor formed over the separation layer is formed and separated from the substrate **301** and transferred to another substrate. Thus, the transistor **300** can be transferred to a substrate having low heat resistance or a flexible substrate.

<<Gate Electrode Layer **302**>>

The gate electrode layer **302** can be formed using a metal selected from aluminum, chromium, copper, tantalum, titanium, molybdenum, and tungsten; an alloy containing any of these metals as a component; an alloy containing any of these metals in combination; or the like. Further, one or more metals selected from manganese and zirconium may be used. Furthermore, the gate electrode layer **302** may have a single-layer structure or a stacked-layer structure of two or more layers. For example, a single-layer structure of an aluminum film containing silicon, a two-layer structure in which a titanium film is stacked over an aluminum film, a two-layer structure in which a titanium film is stacked over a titanium nitride film, a two-layer structure in which a tungsten film is stacked over a titanium nitride film, a two-layer structure in which a tungsten film is stacked over a tantalum nitride film or a tungsten nitride film, a three-layer structure in which a titanium film, an aluminum film, and a titanium film are stacked in this order, and the like can be given. Alternatively, an alloy film containing aluminum and one or more metals selected from titanium, tantalum, tungsten, molybdenum, chromium, neodymium, and scandium; or a nitride film of the alloy film may be used.

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The gate electrode layer 302 can also be formed using a light-transmitting conductive material such as indium tin oxide, indium oxide containing tungsten oxide, indium zinc oxide containing tungsten oxide, indium oxide containing titanium oxide, indium tin oxide containing titanium oxide, indium zinc oxide, or indium tin oxide to which silicon oxide is added. It is also possible to have a stacked-layer structure formed using the above light-transmitting conductive material and the above metal.

Further, an In—Ga—Zn-based oxynitride semiconductor film, an In—Sn-based oxynitride semiconductor film, an In—Ga-based oxynitride semiconductor film, an In—Zn-based oxynitride semiconductor film, a Sn-based oxynitride semiconductor film, an In-based oxynitride semiconductor film, a film of metal nitride (such as InN or ZnN), or the like may be provided between the gate electrode layer 302 and the insulating layer 303. These films each have a work function higher than or equal to 5 eV, preferably higher than or equal to 5.5 eV, which is higher than the electron affinity of an oxide semiconductor; thus, the threshold voltage of a transistor including an oxide semiconductor can shift in the positive direction. Accordingly, a switching element having what is called normally-off characteristics can be achieved. For example, in the case of using an In—Ga—Zn-based oxynitride semiconductor film, an In—Ga—Zn-based oxynitride semiconductor film having a higher nitrogen concentration than at least the oxide semiconductor layer 314, specifically, an In—Ga—Zn-based oxynitride semiconductor film having a nitrogen concentration of 7 atomic % or higher is used.

<<Insulating Layer 303>>

The insulating layer 303 functions as a gate insulating film. The insulating layer 303 in contact with the bottom surface of the oxide semiconductor layer 314 is preferably an amorphous film.

The insulating layer 303 may be formed to have a single-layer structure or a stacked-layer structure using, for example, one or more of a silicon oxide film, a silicon oxynitride film, a silicon nitride oxide film, a silicon nitride film, an aluminum oxide film, a hafnium oxide film, a gallium oxide film, and a Ga—Zn-based metal oxide film.

Further, the insulating layer 303 may be formed using a high-k material such as hafnium silicate (HfSiO_x), hafnium silicate to which nitrogen is added ($\text{HfSi}_x\text{O}_y\text{N}_z$), hafnium aluminate to which nitrogen is added ($\text{HfAl}_x\text{O}_y\text{N}_z$), hafnium oxide, or yttrium oxide, so that gate leakage current of the transistor can be reduced.

<<Source Electrode Layer 305a and Drain Electrode Layer 305b>>

The source electrode layer 305a and the drain electrode layer 305b can be formed to have a single-layer structure or a stacked-layer structure using, as a conductive material, any of single metals such as aluminum, titanium, chromium, nickel, copper, yttrium, zirconium, molybdenum, silver, tantalum, and tungsten, or an alloy containing any of these single metals as its main component. For example, a single-layer structure of an aluminum film containing silicon, a two-layer structure in which a titanium film is stacked over an aluminum film, a two-layer structure in which a titanium film is stacked over a tungsten film, a two-layer structure in which a copper film is formed over a copper-magnesium-aluminum alloy film, a three-layer structure in which a titanium film or a titanium nitride film, an aluminum film or a copper film, and a titanium film or a titanium nitride film are stacked in this order, a three-layer structure in which a molybdenum film or a molybdenum nitride film, an aluminum film or a copper film, and a molybdenum film or a molybdenum nitride film are stacked in

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this order, and the like can be given. Note that a transparent conductive material containing indium oxide, tin oxide, or zinc oxide may be used.

A material which is capable of removing oxygen from part of the oxide semiconductor layer 314 to generate an oxygen vacancy is preferably used for regions of the source electrode layer 305a and the drain electrode layer 305b which are in contact with at least the oxide semiconductor layer 314. The carrier concentrations of the regions of the oxide semiconductor layer 314 in which oxygen vacancies are generated are increased, so that the regions become n-type regions (n^+ layers). Accordingly, the regions can function as a source region and a drain region. Examples of the material which is capable of removing oxygen from the oxide semiconductor layer 314 to generate an oxygen vacancy include tungsten and titanium.

Further, the entire region overlapping with the source electrode layer 305a of the oxide semiconductor layer 314 and the entire region overlapping with the drain electrode layer 305b of the oxide semiconductor layer 314 may serve as the source region and the drain region, respectively, depending on a material for forming the oxide semiconductor layer 314 or the thickness thereof.

When the source region and the drain region are formed in the oxide semiconductor layer 314, contact resistance between the oxide semiconductor layer 314 and each of the source electrode layer 305a and the drain electrode layer 305b can be reduced. Accordingly, the electrical characteristics of the transistor, such as the field-effect mobility and the threshold voltage, can be made favorable.

<<Insulating Layers 306 and 307>>

The insulating layer 306 is preferably formed using an oxide insulating film that contains oxygen at a higher proportion than oxygen in the stoichiometric composition. Part of oxygen is released by heating from the oxide insulating film that contains oxygen at a higher proportion than oxygen in the stoichiometric composition. The oxide insulating film that contains oxygen at a higher proportion than oxygen in the stoichiometric composition is an oxide insulating film in which the amount of released oxygen converted into oxygen atoms is greater than or equal to 1.0×10^{18} atoms/cm³, preferably greater than or equal to 3.0×10^{20} atoms/cm³ in thermal desorption spectroscopy (TDS) analysis.

As the insulating layer 306, an insulating layer such as a silicon oxide layer or a silicon oxynitride layer can be used.

Note that the insulating layer 306 also functions as a film which relieves damage to the oxide semiconductor layer 314 at the time of forming the insulating layer 307 later.

Moreover, an oxide film through which oxygen is permeated may be provided between the insulating layer 306 and the oxide semiconductor layer 314.

As the oxide film through which oxygen is permeated, an insulating layer such as a silicon oxide layer or a silicon oxynitride layer can be used. Note that in this specification, a “silicon oxynitride film” refers to a film that includes more oxygen than nitrogen, and a “silicon nitride oxide film” refers to a film that includes more nitrogen than oxygen.

The insulating layer 307 can be formed using an insulating film having a blocking effect against oxygen, hydrogen, water, and the like. Providing the insulating layer 307 over the insulating layer 306 can prevent outward diffusion of oxygen from the oxide semiconductor layer 314 and entry of hydrogen, water, or the like into the oxide semiconductor layer 314 from the outside. Examples of the insulating film having a blocking effect against oxygen, hydrogen, water, and the like are insulating layers such as a silicon nitride layer, a silicon nitride oxide layer, an aluminum oxide layer, an aluminum

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oxynitride layer, a gallium oxide layer, a gallium oxynitride layer, an yttrium oxide layer, an yttrium oxynitride layer, a hafnium oxide layer, and a hafnium oxynitride layer.

Note that it is also possible to provide a channel protective film over a channel formation region of the oxide semiconductor layer **314**. Channel protective films can also be provided between the source electrode layer **305a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **314** and between the drain electrode layer **305b** and the oxide semiconductor layer **314**. A channel protective transistor is obtained in the case where such channel protective films are provided. As an example, a silicon oxide film or a silicon oxynitride film can be used as a channel protective film. In the case of forming a silicon oxide film or a silicon oxynitride film, a deposition gas containing silicon and an oxidizing gas are preferably used as a source gas. Typical examples of the deposition gas containing silicon include silane, disilane, trisilane, and silane fluoride. As the oxidizing gas, oxygen, ozone, dinitrogen monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide can be given as examples.

<Modification Example of Transistor **300**>

Examples of the structure of a transistor that is partly different from the transistor **300** is described below.

<<Modification Example 1>>

FIG. 9B is a schematic cross-sectional view of a transistor **310**. The transistor **310** differs from the transistor **300** in the structure of the oxide semiconductor layer.

In the transistor **310**, an oxide semiconductor layer **304** includes an oxide semiconductor layer **304a** and an oxide semiconductor layer **304b**. An oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal is used as the oxide semiconductor layer **304a**. An oxide semiconductor layer having higher film quality and a lower defect state density than the oxide semiconductor layer **304a** is used as the oxide semiconductor layer **304b**. Preferably, a CAAC-OS film is used for the oxide semiconductor layer **304b**. In other words, the oxide semiconductor layer **304** of the transistor **310** in this embodiment corresponds to the oxide semiconductor layer **104** described in Embodiment 1 with reference to FIG. 1A. The insulating layer **303** of the transistor **310** corresponds to the insulating layer **102** described in Embodiment 1 with reference to FIG. 1A.

Note that the transistor **310** has the same structure as the transistor **300** except the structure of the oxide semiconductor layer **304**; thus the description of the transistor **300** can be referred to.

<<Modification Example 2>>

FIG. 9C is a schematic cross-sectional view of a transistor **320**. The transistor **320** differs from the transistor **300** and the transistor **310** in the structure of the oxide semiconductor layer.

In an oxide semiconductor layer **324** included in the transistor **320**, an oxide semiconductor layer **324a**, an oxide semiconductor layer **324b**, and an oxide semiconductor layer **324c** are stacked in this order.

The oxide semiconductor layer **324a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **324b** are stacked over the insulating layer **303**. The oxide semiconductor layer **324c** is provided in contact with a top surface of the oxide semiconductor layer **324b** and top and side surfaces of the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b**.

An oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal can be used as each of the oxide semiconductor layer **324a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **324c**. An oxide semiconductor layer having higher film quality and a lower defect state density than the oxide semiconductor layer **324a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **324c** is used as the oxide semi-

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conductor layer **324b**. Preferably, a CAAC-OS film is used for the oxide semiconductor layer **324b**.

<Example of Method for Manufacturing Transistor>

Next, an example of a method for manufacturing the transistor **300** illustrated in FIG. 9A is described.

First, as illustrated in FIG. 10A, the gate electrode layer **302** is formed over the substrate **301**, and the insulating layer **303** is formed over the gate electrode layer **302**.

Here, a glass substrate is used as the substrate **301**.

<<Formation of Gate Electrode Layer>>

A formation method of the gate electrode layer **302** is described below. First, a conductive film is formed by a sputtering method, a CVD method, an evaporation method, or the like and then a resist mask is formed over the conductive film using a first photomask by a photolithography process. Then, part of the conductive film is etched using the resist mask to form the gate electrode layer **302**. After that, the resist mask is removed.

Note that instead of the above formation method, the gate electrode layer **302** may be formed by an electrolytic plating method, a printing method, an ink-jet method, or the like.

<<Formation of Gate Insulating Layer>>

The insulating layer **303** that functions as a gate insulating layer is formed by a sputtering method, a CVD method, an evaporation method, or the like.

In the case where the insulating layer **303** is formed using a silicon oxide film, a silicon oxynitride film, or a silicon nitride oxide film, a deposition gas containing silicon and an oxidizing gas are preferably used as a source gas. Typical examples of the deposition gas containing silicon include silane, disilane, trisilane, and silane fluoride. As the oxidizing gas, oxygen, ozone, dinitrogen monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide can be given as examples.

In the case of forming a silicon nitride film as the insulating layer **303**, it is preferable to use a two-step formation method. First, a first silicon nitride film with few defects is formed by a plasma CVD method in which a mixed gas of silane, nitrogen, and ammonia is used as a source gas. Then, a second silicon nitride film in which the hydrogen concentration is low and hydrogen can be blocked is formed by switching the source gas to a mixed gas of silane and nitrogen. With such a formation method, a silicon nitride film having few defects and a blocking property against hydrogen can be formed as the insulating layer **303**.

Moreover, in the case of forming a gallium oxide film as the insulating layer **303**, a metal organic chemical vapor deposition (MOCVD) method can be employed.

<<Formation of Oxide Semiconductor Layer>>

Next, as illustrated in FIG. 10B, the oxide semiconductor layer **304** is formed over the insulating layer **303**.

The oxide semiconductor layer **314** can be formed in the manner described in Embodiment 2. In this embodiment, first, the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** including a CAAC-OS is formed in the state where the substrate **301** is heated and then the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** is formed in the state where the substrate temperature is room temperature. Then, a resist mask is formed over the oxide semiconductor layer **314b** using a photomask by a photolithography process. Subsequently, the island-like oxide semiconductor layer **314** is formed using the resist mask. After that, the resist mask is removed.

When the oxide semiconductor layer **314a** is formed, the temperature at which the substrate **301** is heated is preferably higher than or equal to 150° C. and lower than or equal to 450° C., further preferably higher than or equal to 200° C. and lower than or equal to 350° C. Note that to reduce the impurity concentration in the oxide semiconductor layer, it is effective

to form the oxide semiconductor layer in the state where the substrate **301** is kept at high temperature.

Note that after the formation of the oxide semiconductor layer **314**, heat treatment is preferably performed thereon in order to remove excess hydrogen (including water and a hydroxyl group) contained in the film (to perform dehydration or dehydrogenation). The temperature of the heat treatment is higher than or equal to 300° C. and lower than or equal to 700° C., or lower than the strain point of the substrate. The heat treatment can be performed under reduced pressure, a nitrogen atmosphere, or the like. Hydrogen which is an impurity imparting n-type conductivity can be removed by the heat treatment.

Note that such heat treatment for dehydration or dehydrogenation may be performed at any timing in the process of manufacturing the transistor as long as the heat treatment is performed after the formation of the oxide semiconductor layer. The heat treatment for dehydration or dehydrogenation may be performed a plurality of times, and may also serve as another heat treatment.

In the heat treatment, it is preferable that water, hydrogen, or the like be not contained in nitrogen or a rare gas such as helium, neon, or argon. The purity of nitrogen or the rare gas such as helium, neon, or argon which is introduced into the heat treatment apparatus is set to preferably 6N (99.9999%) or higher, further preferably 7N (99.99999%) or higher (i.e., the impurity concentration is preferably 1 ppm or lower, further preferably 0.1 ppm or lower).

In addition, after the oxide semiconductor layer **314** is heated by the heat treatment, a high-purity oxygen gas, a high-purity dinitrogen monoxide gas, or ultra dry air (the moisture amount is less than or equal to 20 ppm (−55° C. by conversion into a dew point), preferably less than or equal to 1 ppm, further preferably less than or equal to 10 ppb, in the measurement with the use of a dew point meter of a cavity ring down laser spectroscopy (CRDS) system) may be introduced into the same furnace while the heating temperature is maintained or slow cooling is performed to lower the temperature from the heating temperature. It is preferable that water, hydrogen, or the like be not contained in the oxygen gas or the dinitrogen monoxide gas. The purity of the oxygen gas or the dinitrogen monoxide gas which is introduced into the heat treatment apparatus is preferably 6N or more, further preferably 7N or more (i.e., the impurity concentration in the oxygen gas or the dinitrogen monoxide gas is preferably 1 ppm or lower, further preferably 0.1 ppm or lower). The oxygen gas or the dinitrogen monoxide gas acts to supply oxygen that is a main component of the oxide semiconductor and that has been reduced by the step of removing an impurity for the dehydration or dehydrogenation, so that the oxide semiconductor layer can have high purity and be an i-type (intrinsic) oxide semiconductor layer.

Note that not only high vacuum evacuation of the chamber but also high purification of a sputtering gas is necessary to obtain a highly purified intrinsic oxide semiconductor. As an oxygen gas or an argon gas used as the sputtering gas, a gas that is highly purified to have a dew point of −40° C. or lower, preferably −80° C. or lower, further preferably −100° C. or lower is used, so that entry of moisture or the like into the oxide semiconductor can be prevented as much as possible.

Since there is a possibility that oxygen which is a main component of an oxide semiconductor is also released and reduced by dehydration or dehydrogenation treatment, oxygen (including at least one of an oxygen radical, an oxygen atom, and an oxygen ion) may be introduced into the oxide

semiconductor layer which has been subjected to the dehydration or dehydrogenation treatment to supply oxygen to the layer.

Introduction (supply) of oxygen into the dehydrated or dehydrogenated oxide semiconductor layer enables the oxide semiconductor layer to be highly purified and to be i-type (intrinsic). A change in electrical characteristics of a transistor including the highly-purified and i-type (intrinsic) oxide semiconductor is suppressed, and the transistor is electrically stable.

<<Formation of Source Electrode Layer and Drain Electrode Layer>>

Next, as illustrated in FIG. **10C**, the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b** are formed.

A formation method of the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b** is described below. First, a conductive film is formed by a sputtering method, a CVD method, an evaporation method, or the like. Then, a resist mask is formed over the conductive film using a third photo-mask by a photolithography process. Then, part of the conductive film is etched using the resist mask to form the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b**. After that, the resist mask is removed.

Note that as illustrated in FIG. **10C**, the upper part of the oxide semiconductor layer **304** is partly etched and thinned by the etching of the conductive film in some cases.

<<Formation of Insulating Layer>>

Next, as illustrated in FIG. **10D**, the insulating layer **306** is formed over the oxide semiconductor layer **304**, the source electrode layer **305a**, and the drain electrode layer **305b**, and the insulating layer **307** is successively formed over the insulating layer **306**.

In the case of forming a silicon oxide film or a silicon oxynitride film as the insulating layer **306**, a deposition gas containing silicon and an oxidizing gas are preferably used as a source gas. Typical examples of the deposition gas containing silicon include silane, disilane, trisilane, and silane fluoride. As the oxidizing gas, oxygen, ozone, dinitrogen monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide can be given as examples.

For example, a silicon oxide film or a silicon oxynitride film can be formed under the following conditions: the substrate placed in a treatment chamber of a plasma CVD apparatus which is vacuum-evacuated is held at a temperature higher than or equal to 180° C. and lower than or equal to 260° C., preferably higher than or equal to 200° C. and lower than or equal to 240° C., the pressure is greater than or equal to 100 Pa and less than or equal to 250 Pa, preferably greater than or equal to 100 Pa and less than or equal to 200 Pa with introduction of source gases into the treatment chamber, and a high-frequency power higher than or equal to 0.17 W/cm² and lower than or equal to 0.5 W/cm², preferably higher than or equal to 0.25 W/cm² and lower than or equal to 0.35 W/cm² is supplied to an electrode provided in the treatment chamber.

As the film formation conditions, the high-frequency power having the above power density is supplied to the treatment chamber having the above pressure, whereby the degradation efficiency of the source gas in plasma is increased, oxygen radicals are increased, and oxidation of the source gas is promoted; therefore, the oxygen content of the oxide insulating film gets higher than that of the stoichiometric composition. However, the bonding strength of silicon and oxygen is weak in the above substrate temperature range; therefore, part of oxygen is released by heating. Thus, the oxide insulating film can be formed to be an oxide insulating film that contains oxygen at a higher proportion than oxygen in the stoichiometric composition and from which part of oxygen is released by heating.

In the case where an oxide insulating film is provided between the oxide semiconductor layer **304** and the insulating layer **306**, the oxide insulating film functions as a protective film of the oxide semiconductor layer **304** in the steps of forming the insulating layer **306**. Thus, the insulating layer **306** can be formed using the high-frequency power with high power density while damage to the oxide semiconductor layer **304** is reduced.

For example, as the oxide insulating film, a silicon oxide film or a silicon oxynitride film can be formed under the following conditions: the substrate placed in a treatment chamber of a plasma CVD apparatus which is vacuum-evacuated is held at a temperature higher than or equal to 180° C. and lower than or equal to 400° C., preferably higher than or equal to 200° C. and lower than or equal to 370° C., the pressure is greater than or equal to 20 Pa and less than or equal to 250 Pa, preferably greater than or equal to 100 Pa and less than or equal to 250 Pa with introduction of source gases into the treatment chamber, and a high-frequency power is supplied to an electrode provided in the treatment chamber. Further, by setting the pressure in the treatment chamber to be greater than or equal to 100 Pa and less than or equal to 250 Pa, damage to the oxide semiconductor layer **304** can be reduced when the oxide insulating layer is formed.

A deposition gas containing silicon and an oxidizing gas are preferably used as a source gas of the oxide insulating film. Typical examples of the deposition gas containing silicon include silane, disilane, trisilane, and silane fluoride. As the oxidizing gas, oxygen, ozone, dinitrogen monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide can be given as examples.

The insulating layer **307** can be formed by a sputtering method, a CVD method, or the like.

In the case of forming a silicon nitride film or a silicon nitride oxide film as the insulating layer **307**, a deposition gas containing silicon, an oxidizing gas, and a gas containing nitrogen are preferably used as a source gas. Typical examples of the deposition gas containing silicon include silane, disilane, trisilane, and silane fluoride. As the oxidizing gas, oxygen, ozone, dinitrogen monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide can be given as examples. As the gas containing nitrogen, nitrogen and ammonia can be given as examples.

Through the above process, the transistor **300** can be formed.

<Another Structure Example of Transistor>

An example of the structure of a top-gate transistor to which the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention can be applied will be described below.

Note that descriptions of components having structures or functions similar to those of the above, which are denoted by the same reference numerals, are omitted below.

<<Structure Example>>

FIG. 11A is a schematic cross-sectional view of a top-gate transistor **360**.

The transistor **360** includes an oxide semiconductor layer **364** provided over the substrate **301** provided with an insulating layer **351**, the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b** which are in contact with the top surface of the oxide semiconductor layer **364**, the insulating layer **303** provided over the oxide semiconductor layer **364**, and the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b**, and the gate electrode layer **302** provided over the insulating layer **303** to overlap with the oxide semiconductor layer **364**. Moreover, an insulating layer **352** covers the insulating layer **303** and the gate electrode layer **302**.

The oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention can be used as the oxide semiconductor layer **364** of the transistor **360**.

For example, the oxide semiconductor layer **364** includes an oxide semiconductor layer **364a**, an oxide semiconductor layer **364b**, and an oxide semiconductor layer **364c**. Here, an oxide semiconductor layer including a nanocrystal is used as each of the oxide semiconductor layer **364a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **364c**. An oxide semiconductor layer having higher film quality and a lower defect state density than the oxide semiconductor layer **364a** and the oxide semiconductor layer **364c** is used as the oxide semiconductor layer **364b**. Preferably, a CAAC-OS film is used for the oxide semiconductor layer **364b**.

The insulating layer **351** has a function of suppressing diffusion of impurities from the substrate **301** to the oxide semiconductor layer **364**. For example, a structure similar to that of the insulating layer **307** can be employed. Note that the insulating layer **351** is not necessarily provided when not needed.

The insulating layer **352** can be formed using an insulating film having a blocking effect against oxygen, hydrogen, water, and the like in a manner similar to that of the insulating layer **307**. Note that the insulating layer **307** is not necessarily provided when not needed.

<<Modification Example>>

Structure examples of a transistor that is partly different from the transistor **360** is described below.

FIG. 11B is a schematic cross-sectional view of a transistor **370**. The transistor **370** differs from the transistor **360** in the structure of a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer. Specifically, the transistor **370** differs from the transistor **360** in that a source electrode layer **306a** is formed over the source electrode layer **305a** and a drain electrode layer **306b** is formed over the drain electrode layer **305b**.

As described above, in the case where a material with which an oxygen vacancy can be generated in the oxide semiconductor layer is used for the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b**, oxygen vacancies are generated in and around a region of the oxide semiconductor layer which is in contact with the source electrode layer **305a** or the drain electrode layer **305b**, so that the region becomes n-type and the n-type region can serve as a source or drain region of the transistor.

However, in the case of forming a transistor with an extremely short channel length, the n-type region which is formed by generation of the oxygen vacancies sometimes extends in the channel length direction of the transistor. In that case, the following phenomena and the like occur as for the electrical characteristics of the transistor: the threshold voltage is fluctuated; the source region and the drain region are brought into conduction so that on/off state of the transistor cannot be controlled. Accordingly, when a transistor with an extremely short channel length is formed, it is not preferable that the conductive material which is easily bonded to oxygen be used for a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer.

For this reason, a distance between the source electrode layer **305a** and the drain electrode layer **305b** illustrated as L1 in FIG. 11B is set to 0.8 mm or more, preferably, 1.0 mm or more. When L1 is less than 0.8 mm, it is possible that an adverse effect of oxygen vacancies generated in the channel formation region cannot be eliminated and electrical characteristics of the transistor are degraded. Note that L1 can be regarded as the shortest distance between the end portion of the source electrode layer **305a** and the end portion of the drain electrode layer **305b** which are in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer **364** and face each other. Note that in FIG. 11B, the n-type region is illustrated schematically with a dotted line.

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Thus, in the transistor 370, the source electrode layer 306a is formed in contact with the source electrode layer 305a and the oxide semiconductor layer 364, using a conductive material which is less likely to be bonded to oxygen. In addition, the drain electrode layer 306b is formed in contact with the drain electrode layer 305b and the oxide semiconductor layer 364, using a conductive material which is less likely to be bonded to oxygen.

The source electrode layer 306a extends in a direction of L1 beyond an end portion of the source electrode layer 305a in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 364, and the drain electrode layer 306b extends in the direction of L1 beyond an end portion of the drain electrode layer 305b in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 364.

The extended portion of the source electrode layer 306a and the extended portion of the drain electrode layer 306b are in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 364 (in particular, the oxide semiconductor layer 364c). In the transistor 370 illustrated in FIG. 11B, a distance between an end portion of the extended portion of the source electrode layer 306a, the end portion being in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 364 and an end portion of the extended portion of the drain electrode layer 306b, the end portion being in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 364 corresponds to the channel length. The channel length is shown as L2 in FIG. 11B.

As the conductive material which is less likely to be bonded to oxygen and is used to form the source electrode layer 306a and the drain electrode layer 306b, for example, a conductive nitride such as tantalum nitride or titanium nitride, or ruthenium is preferably used. Note that the conductive material which is less likely to be bonded to oxygen includes, in its category, a material to which oxygen is less likely to be diffused. The thickness of the conductive material is preferably greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 500 nm, further preferably greater than or equal to 10 nm and less than or equal to 300 nm, still further preferably greater than or equal to 10 nm and less than or equal to 100 nm.

With the use of the above conductive material which is less likely to be bonded to oxygen for the source electrode layer 306a and the drain electrode layer 306b, generation of an oxygen vacancy in the channel formation region of the oxide semiconductor layer 364 can be suppressed, so that change of the channel formation region into an n-type can be suppressed. Accordingly, even a transistor with an extremely short channel length can have favorable electrical characteristics. That is, L2 can be made smaller than L1; for example, even when L2 is 30 nm or shorter, favorable electrical characteristics of the transistor can be obtained. Further, in the case where the width of a single crystal region included in the oxide semiconductor layer 364 is 30 nm or more, the whole area of the channel formation region might be a single crystal oxide semiconductor layer in a cross section in the channel length direction.

Note that the conductive nitride such as tantalum nitride or titanium nitride might occlude hydrogen. Therefore, when conductive nitride is provided in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer 364, the hydrogen concentration in the oxide semiconductor layer 364 can be reduced.

Note that when a transistor with an extremely short channel length is formed, the source electrode layer 306a and the drain electrode layer 306b may be formed in such a manner that resist masks are processed by a method suitable for thin line processing, such as an electron beam exposure, and then etching treatment is performed. Note that with the use of a positive type resist for the resist masks, the exposed region

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can be minimized and throughput can be thus improved. In the above manner, a transistor with a channel length of 30 nm or less can be formed.

This embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the other embodiments disclosed in this specification. [Embodiment 5]

FIG. 12A illustrates an example of a circuit diagram of a NOR circuit, which is a logic circuit, as an example of the semiconductor device of one embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 12B is a circuit diagram of a NAND circuit.

In the NOR circuit in FIG. 12A, p-channel transistors 801 and 802 are transistors in each of which a channel formation region is formed using a semiconductor material (e.g., silicon) other than an oxide semiconductor, and n-channel transistors 803 and 804 each include an oxide semiconductor and each have a structure similar to any of the structures of the transistors described in Embodiment 4.

A transistor including a semiconductor material such as silicon can easily operate at high speed. In contrast, a charge can be held in a transistor including an oxide semiconductor for a long time owing to its characteristics.

To miniaturize the logic circuit, it is preferable that the n-channel transistors 803 and 804 be stacked over the p-channel transistors 801 and 802. For example, the transistors 801 and 802 can be formed using a single crystal silicon substrate, and the transistors 803 and 804 can be formed over the transistors 801 and 802 with an insulating layer provided therebetween.

In the NAND circuit in FIG. 12B, p-channel transistors 811 and 814 are transistors in each of which a channel formation region is formed using a semiconductor material (e.g., silicon) other than an oxide semiconductor, and n-channel transistors 812 and 813 each include an oxide semiconductor layer and each have a structure similar to any of the structures of the transistors described in Embodiment 4.

Note that in the NAND circuit in FIG. 12B, the transistors 812 and 813 have the structure similar to the transistor 360, and by controlling the potential of the second gate electrode, for example, by setting the potential to GND, the threshold voltages of the transistors 812 and 813 are increased, so that the transistors can be normally off.

As in the NOR circuit in FIG. 12A, to miniaturize the logic circuit, it is preferable that the n-channel transistors 812 and 813 be stacked over the p-channel transistors 811 and 814.

By applying a transistor including an oxide semiconductor for a channel formation region and having an extremely low off-state current to the semiconductor device in this embodiment, power consumption of the semiconductor device can be sufficiently reduced.

A semiconductor device which is miniaturized, is highly integrated, and has stable and excellent electrical characteristics by stacking semiconductor elements including different semiconductor materials and a method for manufacturing the semiconductor device can be provided.

In addition, by employing the structure of the transistor including the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention, a NOR circuit and a NAND circuit with high reliability and stable characteristics can be provided.

Note that although the NOR circuit and the NAND circuit including the transistor described in Embodiment 3 are described as examples in this embodiment, one embodiment of the present invention is not particularly limited to the circuits, and an AND circuit, an OR circuit, or the like can be formed using the transistor described in Embodiment 3.

Alternatively, it is possible to fabricate a display device by combining a display element with any of the transistors

described in this embodiment and the other embodiments. For example, a display element, a display device which is a device including a display element, a light-emitting element, and a light-emitting device which is a device including a light-emitting element can employ various modes and can include various elements. For example, a display medium, whose contrast, luminance, reflectivity, transmittance, or the like changes by electromagnetic action, such as an EL (electroluminescence) element (e.g., an EL element including organic and inorganic materials, an organic EL element, or an inorganic EL element), an LED (e.g., a white LED, a red LED, a green LED, or a blue LED), a transistor (a transistor which emits light depending on the amount of current), an electron emitter, a liquid crystal element, electronic ink, an electrophoretic element, a grating light valve (GLV), a plasma display panel (PDP), a digital micromirror device (DMD), a piezoelectric ceramic display, or a carbon nanotube, can be used as a display element, a display device, a light-emitting element, or a light-emitting device. Note that example of display devices including EL elements include an EL display. Display devices having electron emitters include a field emission display (FED), an SED-type flat panel display (SED: surface-conduction electron-emitter display), and the like. Examples of display devices including liquid crystal elements include a liquid crystal display (e.g., a transmissive liquid crystal display, a transreflective liquid crystal display, a reflective liquid crystal display, a direct-view liquid crystal display, or a projection liquid crystal display) and the like. Examples of display devices including electronic ink or electrophoretic elements include electronic paper.

The methods and structures described in this embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the methods and structures described in the other embodiments.

[Embodiment 6]

In this embodiment, an example of a semiconductor device (memory device) which includes the transistor described in Embodiment 3, which can retain stored data even when not powered, and which has an unlimited number of write cycles will be described with reference to drawings.

FIG. 13A is a circuit diagram illustrating a semiconductor device of this embodiment.

A transistor including a semiconductor material (e.g., silicon) other than an oxide semiconductor can be used as a transistor 260 illustrated in FIG. 13A and thus the transistor 260 can easily operate at high speed. Further, a structure similar to that of the transistor described in Embodiment 4 which includes the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention can be employed for a transistor 262 to enable charge to be held for a long time owing to its characteristics.

Although all the transistors are n-channel transistors here, p-channel transistors can be used as the transistors used for the semiconductor device described in this embodiment.

In FIG. 13A, a first wiring (1st Line) is electrically connected to a source electrode layer of the transistor 260. A second wiring (2nd Line) is electrically connected to a drain electrode layer of the transistor 260. A third wiring (3rd Line) is electrically connected to one of a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer of the transistor 262, and a fourth wiring (4th Line) is electrically connected to a gate electrode layer of the transistor 262. A gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 and the other of the source electrode layer and the drain electrode layer of the transistor 262 are electrically connected to one electrode of a capacitor 264. A fifth wiring (5th Line) is electrically connected to the other electrode of the capacitor 264.

The semiconductor device in FIG. 13A utilizes a characteristic in which the potential of the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 can be held, and thus enables writing, storing, and reading of data as follows.

Writing and storing of data are described. First, the potential of the fourth wiring is set to a potential at which the transistor 262 is turned on, so that the transistor 262 is turned on. Accordingly, the potential of the third wiring is supplied to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 and the capacitor 264. That is, a predetermined charge is supplied to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 (writing). Here, one of two kinds of charges providing different potential levels (hereinafter referred to as a low-level charge and a high-level charge) is supplied. After that, the potential of the fourth wiring is set to a potential at which the transistor 262 is turned off, so that the transistor 262 is turned off. Thus, the charge supplied to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 is held (holding).

Since the off-state current of the transistor 262 is extremely low, the charge of the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 is held for a long time.

Next, reading of data is described. By supplying an appropriate potential (a reading potential) to the fifth wiring while supplying a predetermined potential (a constant potential) to the first wiring, the potential of the second wiring varies depending on the amount of charge held in the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260. This is because in general, when the transistor 260 is an n-channel transistor, an apparent threshold voltage V_{th_H} in the case where the high-level charge is given to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 is lower than an apparent threshold voltage V_{th_L} in the case where the low-level charge is given to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260. Here, an apparent threshold voltage refers to the potential of the fifth wiring which is needed to turn on the transistor 260. Thus, the potential of the fifth wiring is set to a potential V_0 which is between V_{th_H} and V_{th_L} , whereby charge supplied to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 260 can be determined. For example, in the case where the high-level charge is supplied in writing, when the potential of the fifth wiring is V_0 ($>V_{th_H}$), the transistor 260 is turned on. In the case where the low-level charge is supplied in writing, even when the potential of the fifth wiring is V_0 ($<V_{th_L}$), the transistor 260 remains off. Therefore, the stored data can be read by the potential of the second wiring.

Note that in the case where memory cells are arrayed, it is necessary that only data of a desired memory cell be able to be read. The fifth wiring in the case where data is not read may be supplied with a potential at which the transistor 260 is turned off regardless of the state of the gate electrode layer, that is, a potential lower than V_{th_H} . Alternatively, the fifth wiring may be supplied with a potential at which the transistor 260 is turned on regardless of the state of the gate electrode layer, that is, a potential higher than V_{th_L} .

FIG. 13B illustrates another example of one embodiment of the structure of the storage device. FIG. 13B illustrates an example of a circuit configuration of the semiconductor device, and FIG. 13C is a conceptual diagram illustrating an example of the semiconductor device. First, the semiconductor device illustrated in FIG. 13B is described, and then the semiconductor device illustrated in FIG. 13C is described.

In the semiconductor device illustrated in FIG. 13B, a bit line BL is electrically connected to the source electrode or the drain electrode of the transistor 262, a word line WL is electrically connected to the gate electrode layer of the transistor 262, and the source electrode or the drain electrode of the transistor 262 is electrically connected to a first terminal of a capacitor 254.

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Here, the transistor **262** including an oxide semiconductor has an extremely low off-state current. For that reason, a potential of the first terminal of the capacitor **254** (or a charge accumulated in the capacitor **254**) can be held for an extremely long time by turning off the transistor **262**.

Next, writing and holding of data in the semiconductor device (a memory cell **250**) illustrated in FIG. **13B** are described.

First, the potential of the word line WL is set to a potential at which the transistor **262** is turned on, and the transistor **262** is turned on. Accordingly, the potential of the bit line BL is supplied to the first terminal of the capacitor **254** (writing). After that, the potential of the word line WL is set to a potential at which the transistor **262** is turned off, so that the transistor **262** is turned off. Thus, the potential of the first terminal of the capacitor **254** is held (holding).

Since the transistor **262** has an extremely low off-state current, the potential of the first terminal of the capacitor **254** (or a charge accumulated in the capacitor **254**) can be held for an extremely long time.

Next, reading of data is described. When the transistor **262** is turned on, the bit line BL which is in a floating state and the capacitor **254** are electrically connected to each other, and the charge is redistributed between the bit line BL and the capacitor **254**. As a result, the potential of the bit line BL is changed. The amount of change in potential of the bit line BL varies depending on the potential of the first terminal of the capacitor **254** (or the charge accumulated in the capacitor **254**).

For example, the potential of the bit line BL after charge redistribution is $(C_B \times V_{B0} + C \times V) / (C_B + C)$, where V is the potential of the first terminal of the capacitor **254**, C is the capacitance of the capacitor **254**, C_B is the capacitance component of the bit line BL (hereinafter also referred to as bit line capacitance), and V_{B0} is the potential of the bit line BL before the charge redistribution. Therefore, it can be found that assuming that the memory cell **250** is in either of two states in which the potentials of the first terminal of the capacitor **254** are V_1 and V_0 ($V_1 > V_0$), the potential of the bit line BL in the case of holding the potential V_1 ($= (C_B \times V_{B0} + C \times V_1) / (C_B + C)$) is higher than the potential of the bit line BL in the case of holding the potential V_0 ($= (C_B \times V_{B0} + C \times V_0) / (C_B + C)$).

Then, by comparing the potential of the bit line BL with a predetermined potential, data can be read.

As described above, the semiconductor device illustrated in FIG. **13B** can hold charge that is accumulated in the capacitor **254** for a long time because the off-state current of the transistor **262** is extremely low. In other words, refresh operation becomes unnecessary or the frequency of the refresh operation can be extremely low, which leads to a sufficient reduction in power consumption. Moreover, stored data can be retained for a long period even when power is not supplied.

Next, the semiconductor device illustrated in FIG. **13C** is described.

The semiconductor device illustrated in FIG. **13C** includes a memory cell array **251** (memory cell arrays **251a** and **251b**) including the plurality of memory cells **250** illustrated in FIG. **13B** as memory circuits in the upper portion, and a peripheral circuit **253** in the lower portion which is necessary for operating the memory cell array **251**. Note that the peripheral circuit **253** is electrically connected to the memory cell array **251**.

In the structure illustrated in FIG. **13C**, the peripheral circuit **253** can be provided directly under the memory cell array **251** (the memory cell arrays **251a** and **251b**). Thus, the size of the semiconductor device can be reduced.

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It is preferable that a semiconductor material of the transistor provided in the peripheral circuit **253** be different from that of the transistor **262**. For example, silicon, germanium, silicon germanium, silicon carbide, or gallium arsenide can be used, and a single crystal semiconductor is preferably used. Alternatively, an organic semiconductor material or the like may be used. A transistor including such a semiconductor material can operate at sufficiently high speed. Thus, the transistor enables a variety of circuits (e.g., a logic circuit and a driver circuit) which need to operate at high speed to be favorably obtained.

Note that FIG. **13C** illustrates, as an example, the semiconductor device in which two memory cell arrays **251** (the memory cell arrays **251a** and **251b**) are stacked; however, the number of stacked memory cell arrays is not limited to two. Three or more memory cells arrays may be stacked.

When a transistor including the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention in a channel formation region is used as the transistor **262**, stored data can be retained for a long period. In other words, refresh operation becomes unnecessary or the frequency of the refresh operation in a semiconductor memory device can be extremely low, which leads to a sufficient reduction in power consumption.

The methods and structures described in this embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the methods and structures described in the other embodiments.

[Embodiment 7]

In this embodiment, a structure of a display panel of one embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to FIGS. **14A** to **14C**.

FIG. **14A** is a top view of the display panel of one embodiment of the present invention. FIG. **14B** is a circuit diagram illustrating a pixel circuit that can be used in the case where a liquid crystal element is used in a pixel in the display panel of one embodiment of the present invention. FIG. **14C** is a circuit diagram illustrating a pixel circuit that can be used in the case where an organic EL element is used in a pixel in the display panel of one embodiment of the present invention.

The transistor in the pixel portion can be formed in accordance with Embodiment 3. Further, the transistor can be easily formed as an n-channel transistor, and thus part of a driver circuit that can be formed using an n-channel transistor can be formed over the same substrate as the transistor of the pixel portion. With the use of the transistor described in Embodiment 3 for the pixel portion or the driver circuit in this manner, a highly reliable display device can be provided.

FIG. **14A** illustrates an example of a block diagram of an active matrix display device. A pixel portion **501**, a first scan line driver circuit **502**, a second scan line driver circuit **503**, and a signal line driver circuit **504** are provided over a substrate **500** in the display device. In the pixel portion **501**, a plurality of signal lines extended from the signal line driver circuit **504** are arranged and a plurality of scan lines extended from the first scan line driver circuit **502** and the second scan line driver circuit **503** are arranged. Note that pixels which include display elements are provided in a matrix in respective regions where the scan lines and the signal lines intersect with each other. The substrate **500** of the display device is connected to a timing control circuit (also referred to as a controller or a controller IC) through a connection portion such as a flexible printed circuit (FPC).

In FIG. **14A**, the first scan line driver circuit **502**, the second scan line driver circuit **503**, and the signal line driver circuit **504** are formed over the same substrate **500** as the pixel portion **501**. Accordingly, the number of components which are provided outside, such as a driver circuit, can be reduced, so that a reduction in cost can be achieved. Further, in the case

where the driver circuit is provided outside the substrate **500**, wirings would need to be extended and the number of connections of wirings would be increased, but when the driver circuit is provided over the substrate **500**, the number of connections of the wirings can be reduced. Consequently, an improvement in reliability or yield can be achieved.

<Liquid Crystal Panel>

FIG. **14B** illustrates an example of a circuit configuration of the pixel. Here, a pixel circuit which is applicable to a pixel of a VA liquid crystal display panel is illustrated.

This pixel circuit can be applied to a structure in which one pixel includes a plurality of pixel electrode layers. The pixel electrode layers are connected to different transistors, and the transistors can be driven with different gate signals. Accordingly, signals applied to individual pixel electrode layers in a multi-domain pixel can be controlled independently.

A gate wiring **512** of a transistor **516** and a gate wiring **513** of a transistor **517** are separated so that different gate signals can be supplied thereto. In contrast, a source or drain electrode layer **514** that functions as a data line is shared by the transistors **516** and **517**. The transistor described in Embodiment 3 can be used as appropriate as each of the transistors **516** and **517**. Thus, a highly reliable liquid crystal display panel can be provided.

The shapes of a first pixel electrode layer electrically connected to the transistor **516** and a second pixel electrode layer electrically connected to the transistor **517** are described. The first pixel electrode layer and the second pixel electrode layer are separated by a slit. The first pixel electrode layer is spread in a V shape and the second pixel electrode layer is provided so as to surround the first pixel electrode layer.

A gate electrode layer of the transistor **516** is connected to the gate wiring **512**, and a gate electrode layer of the transistor **517** is connected to the gate wiring **513**. When different gate signals are supplied to the gate wiring **512** and the gate wiring **513**, operation timings of the transistor **516** and the transistor **517** can be varied. As a result, alignment of liquid crystals can be controlled.

Further, a storage capacitor may be formed using a capacitor wiring **510**, a gate insulating layer that functions as a dielectric, and a capacitor electrode electrically connected to the first pixel electrode layer or the second pixel electrode layer.

The multi-domain pixel includes a first liquid crystal element **518** and a second liquid crystal element **519**. The first liquid crystal element **518** includes the first pixel electrode layer, a counter electrode layer, and a liquid crystal layer therebetween. The second liquid crystal element **519** includes the second pixel electrode layer, a counter electrode layer, and a liquid crystal layer therebetween.

Note that a pixel circuit of the present invention is not limited to that shown in FIG. **14B**. For example, a switch, a resistor, a capacitor, a transistor, a sensor, a logic circuit, or the like may be added to the pixel illustrated in FIG. **14B**.

<Organic EL Panel>

FIG. **14C** illustrates another example of a circuit configuration of the pixel. Here, a pixel structure of a display panel including an organic EL element is shown.

In an organic EL element, by application of voltage to a light-emitting element, electrons are injected from one of a pair of electrodes and holes are injected from the other of the pair of electrodes, into a layer containing a light-emitting organic compound; thus, current flows. The electrons and holes are recombined, and thus, the light-emitting organic compound is excited. The light-emitting organic compound returns to a ground state from the excited state, thereby emit-

ting light. Owing to such a mechanism, this light-emitting element is referred to as a current-excitation light-emitting element.

FIG. **14C** illustrates an applicable example of a pixel circuit. Here, one pixel includes two n-channel transistors. Note that the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention can be used for channel formation regions of the n-channel transistors. Further, digital time grayscale driving can be employed for the pixel circuit.

The configuration of the applicable pixel circuit and operation of a pixel employing digital time grayscale driving are described.

A pixel **520** includes a switching transistor **521**, a driver transistor **522**, a light-emitting element **524**, and a capacitor **523**. A gate electrode layer of the switching transistor **521** is connected to a scan line **526**, a first electrode (one of a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer) of the switching transistor **521** is connected to a signal line **525**, and a second electrode (the other of the source electrode layer and the drain electrode layer) of the switching transistor **521** is connected to a gate electrode layer of the driver transistor **522**. The gate electrode layer of the driver transistor **522** is connected to a power supply line **527** through the capacitor **523**, a first electrode of the driver transistor **522** is connected to the power supply line **527**, and a second electrode of the driver transistor **522** is connected to a first electrode (a pixel electrode) of the light-emitting element **524**. A second electrode of the light-emitting element **524** corresponds to a common electrode **528**. The common electrode **528** is electrically connected to a common potential line formed over the same substrate as the common electrode **528**.

As the switching transistor **521** and the driver transistor **522**, the transistor described in Embodiment 3 can be used as appropriate. In this manner, a highly reliable organic EL display panel can be provided.

The potential of the second electrode (the common electrode **528**) of the light-emitting element **524** is set to be a low power supply potential. Note that the low power supply potential is lower than a high power supply potential supplied to the power supply line **527**. For example, the low power supply potential can be GND, 0V, or the like. The high power supply potential and the low power supply potential are set to be higher than or equal to the forward threshold voltage of the light-emitting element **524**, and the difference between the potentials is applied to the light-emitting element **524**, whereby current is supplied to the light-emitting element **524**, leading to light emission. The forward voltage of the light-emitting element **524** refers to a voltage at which a desired luminance is obtained, and is at least higher than a forward threshold voltage.

Note that gate capacitance of the driver transistor **522** may be used as a substitute for the capacitor **523**, so that the capacitor **523** can be omitted. The gate capacitance of the driver transistor **522** may be formed between the channel formation region and the gate electrode layer.

Next, a signal input to the driver transistor **522** is described. In the case of a voltage-input voltage driving method, a video signal for substantially turning on or off the driver transistor **522** is input to the driver transistor **522**. In order for the driver transistor **522** to operate in a linear region, voltage higher than the voltage of the power supply line **527** is applied to the gate electrode layer of the driver transistor **522**. Note that voltage greater than or equal to voltage which is the sum of power supply line voltage and the threshold voltage V_{th} of the driver transistor **522** is applied to the signal line **525**.

In the case of performing analog grayscale driving, a voltage greater than or equal to a voltage which is the sum of the

forward voltage of the light-emitting element **524** and the threshold voltage V_{th} of the driver transistor **522** is applied to the gate electrode layer of the driver transistor **522**. A video signal by which the driver transistor **522** is operated in a saturation region is input, so that current is supplied to the light-emitting element **524**. In order for the driver transistor **522** to operate in a saturation region, the potential of the power supply line **527** is set higher than the gate potential of the driver transistor **522**. When an analog video signal is used, it is possible to supply current to the light-emitting element **524** in accordance with the video signal and perform analog grayscale driving.

Note that the configuration of the pixel circuit of the present invention is not limited to that shown in FIG. **14C**. For example, a switch, a resistor, a capacitor, a sensor, a transistor, a logic circuit, or the like may be added to the pixel circuit illustrated in FIG. **14C**.

The methods and structures described in this embodiment can be combined as appropriate with any of the methods and structures described in the other embodiments. [Embodiment 8]

In this embodiment, structures of a semiconductor device including the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention and electronic devices will be described with reference to FIG. **15** and FIGS. **16A** to **16D**.

FIG. **15** is a block diagram of an electronic device including the semiconductor device to which the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention is applied.

FIGS. **16A** to **16D** are external views of electronic devices each including the semiconductor device to which the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention is applied.

An electronic device illustrated in FIG. **15** includes an RF circuit **901**, an analog baseband circuit **902**, a digital baseband circuit **903**, a battery **904**, a power supply circuit **905**, an application processor **906**, a flash memory **910**, a display controller **911**, a memory circuit **912**, a display **913**, a touch sensor **919**, an audio circuit **917**, a keyboard **918**, and the like.

The application processor **906** includes a CPU **907**, a DSP **908**, and an interface (IF) **909**. Moreover, the memory circuit **912** can include an SRAM or a DRAM.

The transistor described in Embodiment 3 is applied to the memory circuit **912**, whereby a highly reliable electronic device which can write and read data can be provided.

The transistor described in Embodiment 3 is applied to a register or the like included in the CPU **907** or the DSP **908**, whereby a highly reliable electronic device which can write and read data can be provided.

Note that in the case where the off-state leakage current of the transistor described in Embodiment 3 is extremely low, the memory circuit **912** can retain stored data for a long period and can have sufficiently reduced power consumption. Moreover, the CPU **907** or the DSP **908** can store the state before power gating in a register or the like during a period in which the power gating is performed.

Further, the display **913** includes a display portion **914**, a source driver **915**, and a gate driver **916**.

The display portion **914** includes a plurality of pixels arranged in a matrix. The pixel includes a pixel circuit, and the pixel circuit is electrically connected to the gate driver **916**.

The transistor described in Embodiment 3 can be used as appropriate in the pixel circuit or the gate driver **916**. Accordingly, a highly reliable display can be provided.

Examples of electronic devices are a television set (also referred to as a television or a television receiver), a monitor of a computer or the like, a camera such as a digital camera or

a digital video camera, a digital photo frame, a mobile phone handset (also referred to as a mobile phone or a mobile phone device), a portable game machine, a portable information terminal, an audio reproducing device, a large-sized game machine such as a pachinko machine, and the like.

FIG. **16A** illustrates a portable information terminal, which includes a main body **1101**, a housing **1102**, a display portion **1103a**, a display portion **1103b**, and the like. The display portion **1103b** includes a touch panel. By touching a keyboard button **1104** displayed on the display portion **1103b**, screen operation can be carried out, and text can be input. Needless to say, the display portion **1103a** may function as a touch panel. A liquid crystal panel or an organic light-emitting panel is manufactured by using the transistor described in Embodiment 3 as a switching element and applied to the display portion **1103a** or **1103b**, whereby a highly reliable portable information terminal can be provided.

The portable information terminal illustrated in FIG. **16A** can have a function of displaying a variety of kinds of data (e.g., a still image, a moving image, and a text image), a function of displaying a calendar, a date, the time, or the like on the display portion, a function of operating or editing data displayed on the display portion, a function of controlling processing by a variety of kinds of software (programs), and the like. Further, an external connection terminal (an ear-phone terminal, a USB terminal, or the like), a recording medium insertion portion, or the like may be provided on the back surface or the side surface of the housing.

The portable information terminal illustrated in FIG. **16A** may transmit and receive data wirelessly. Through wireless communication, desired book data or the like can be purchased and downloaded from an electronic book server.

FIG. **16B** illustrates a portable music player, which includes in a main body **1021**, a display portion **1023**, a fixing portion **1022** with which the portable music player can be worn on the ear, a speaker, an operation button **1024**, an external memory slot **1025**, and the like. A liquid crystal panel or an organic light-emitting panel is manufactured by using the transistor described in Embodiment 3 as a switching element and applied to the display portion **1023**, whereby a highly reliable portable music player can be provided.

Furthermore, when the portable music player illustrated in FIG. **16B** has an antenna, a microphone function, or a wireless communication function and is used with a mobile phone, a user can talk on the phone wirelessly in a hands-free way while driving a car or the like.

FIG. **16C** illustrates a mobile phone, which includes two housings, a housing **1030** and a housing **1031**. The housing **1031** includes a display panel **1032**, a speaker **1033**, a microphone **1034**, a pointing device **1036**, a camera lens **1037**, an external connection terminal **1038**, and the like. The housing **1030** is provided with a solar cell **1040** for charging the mobile phone, an external memory slot **1041**, and the like. In addition, an antenna is incorporated in the housing **1031**. The transistor described in Embodiment 3 is applied to the display panel **1032**, whereby a highly reliable mobile phone can be provided.

Further, the display panel **1032** includes a touch panel. A plurality of operation keys **1035** which are displayed as images are indicated by dotted lines in FIG. **16C**. Note that a boosting circuit by which a voltage output from the solar cell **1040** is increased so as to be sufficiently high for each circuit is also included.

For example, a power transistor used for a power supply circuit such as a boosting circuit can also be formed when the oxide semiconductor layer of the transistor described in the

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Embodiment 3 has a thickness greater than or equal to 2 μm and less than or equal to 50 μm .

In the display panel 1032, the direction of display is changed as appropriate depending on the application mode. Further, the mobile phone is provided with the camera lens 1037 on the same surface as the display panel 1032, and thus it can be used as a video phone. The speaker 1033 and the microphone 1034 can be used for videophone calls, recording, and playing sound, and the like as well as voice calls. Moreover, the housings 1030 and 1031 in a state where they are developed as illustrated in FIG. 16C can shift, by sliding, to a state where one is lapped over the other. Therefore, the size of the mobile phone can be reduced, which makes the mobile phone suitable for being carried around.

The external connection terminal 1038 can be connected to an AC adaptor and a variety of cables such as a USB cable, whereby charging and data communication with a personal computer or the like are possible. Further, by inserting a recording medium into the external memory slot 1041, a larger amount of data can be stored and moved.

Further, in addition to the above functions, an infrared communication function, a television reception function, or the like may be provided.

FIG. 16D illustrates an example of a television set. In a television set 1050, a display portion 1053 is incorporated in a housing 1051. Images can be displayed on the display portion 1053. Moreover, a CPU is incorporated in a stand 1055 for supporting the housing 1051. The transistor described in Embodiment 3 is applied to the display portion 1053 and the CPU, whereby the television set 1050 can have high reliability.

The television set 1050 can be operated with an operation switch of the housing 1051 or a separate remote controller. Further, the remote controller may be provided with a display portion for displaying data output from the remote controller.

Note that the television set 1050 is provided with a receiver, a modem, and the like. With the use of the receiver, the television set 1050 can receive general TV broadcasts. Moreover, when the television set 1050 is connected to a communication network with or without wires via the modem, one-way (from a sender to a receiver) or two-way (between a sender and a receiver or between receivers) information communication can be performed.

Further, the television set 1050 is provided with an external connection terminal 1054, a storage medium recording and reproducing portion 1052, and an external memory slot. The external connection terminal 1054 can be connected to various types of cables such as a USB cable, whereby data communication with a personal computer or the like is possible. A disk storage medium is inserted into the storage medium recording and reproducing portion 1052, and data stored in the storage medium can be read and data can be written to the storage medium. In addition, an image, a video, or the like stored as data in an external memory 1056 inserted into the external memory slot can be displayed on the display portion 1053.

Further, in the case where the off-state leakage current of the transistor described in Embodiment 3 is extremely low, when the transistor is applied to the external memory 1056 or the CPU, the television set 1050 can have high reliability and sufficiently reduced power consumption.

EXAMPLE 1

In this example, a nanocrystal included in the oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention

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will be described below with an electron diffraction pattern of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film.

An electron diffraction pattern obtained by electron diffraction with a beam diameter of 10 nm ϕ or less (nanobeam electron diffraction) of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is neither a halo pattern indicating an amorphous state nor a pattern with spots having regularity indicating a crystalline state in which crystals are aligned with a specific plane. That is, the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is an oxide semiconductor film whose electron diffraction pattern has spots not having directionality.

FIG. 17A is a cross-sectional transmission electron microscopy (TEM) image of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film. FIGS. 17B, 17C, and 17D show electron diffraction patterns obtained by nanobeam electron diffraction performed on Points 1, 2, 3 in FIG. 17A, respectively.

A sample in which an In—Ga—Zn-based oxide film was formed, as an example of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film in FIGS. 17A to 17D, over a quartz glass substrate to a thickness of 50 nm was used. The nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film shown in FIGS. 17A to 17D was formed under the following conditions: an oxide target containing In, Ga, and Zn at an atomic ratio of 1:1:1 was used, the atmosphere was an oxygen atmosphere (flow rate of 45 sccm), the pressure was 0.4 Pa, a direct current (DC) power of 0.5 kW was applied, and the substrate temperature was room temperature. Then, the width of the formed nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film was reduced to 100 nm or less (e.g., 40 nm \pm 10 nm), and a cross-sectional TEM image and nanobeam electron diffraction patterns were obtained.

FIG. 17A is the cross-sectional TEM image of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film which was taken with a transmission electron microscope ("H-9000NAR" manufactured by Hitachi High-Technologies Corporation) at an acceleration voltage of 300 kV and at a magnification of 2,000,000 times. FIGS. 17B to 17D show the electron diffraction patterns obtained by nanobeam electron diffraction with a beam diameter of about 1 nm ϕ , with a transmission electron microscope ("HF-2000" manufactured by Hitachi High-Technologies Corporation) at an acceleration voltage of 200 kV. Note that the measurement area of the nanobeam electron diffraction with a beam diameter of about 1 nm ϕ is greater than or equal to 5 nm ϕ and less than or equal to 10 nm ϕ .

As shown in FIG. 17B, in the nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film, a plurality of circumferentially arranged spots (bright points) are observed. In other words, in the pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film, a plurality of circumferentially (concentrically) distributed spots are observed, or a plurality of circumferentially distributed spots form a plurality of concentric circles.

In FIG. 17C showing the central portion of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film in the thickness direction and in FIG. 17D showing the vicinity of an interface between the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film and the quartz glass substrate, a plurality of circumferentially distributed spots are observed as in FIG. 17B. In FIG. 17C, a radius to a first circumference (the distance from a main spot) is in a range from 3.88/nm to 4.93/nm, or from 0.203 nm to 0.257 nm when converted into interplanar spacing.

The nanobeam electron diffraction patterns shown in FIGS. 17B to 17D indicate that the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film includes a plurality of crystal parts whose surface orientations are random and whose sizes are different from each other.

FIG. 18A is a plane TEM image of a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film. FIG. 18B shows an electron diffraction

pattern obtained by selected-area electron diffraction performed on a region surrounded by a circle in FIG. 18A.

A sample in which an In—Ga—Zn-based oxide film was formed, as an example of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film shown in FIGS. 18A and 18B, over a quartz glass substrate to a thickness of 30 nm was used. The nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film shown in FIGS. 18A and 18B was formed under the following conditions: an oxide target containing In, Ga, and Zn at an atomic ratio of 1:1:1 was used, the atmosphere was an oxygen atmosphere (flow rate of 45 sccm), the pressure was 0.4 Pa, a direct current (DC) power of 0.5 kW was applied, and the substrate temperature was room temperature. Then, the sample was thinned, and the plane TEM image and the selected-area electron diffraction pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film were obtained.

FIG. 18A is the plane TEM image of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film which was taken with a transmission electron microscope ("H-9000NAR" manufactured by Hitachi High-Technologies Corporation) at an acceleration voltage of 300 kV and at a magnification of 500,000 times. FIG. 18B is the electron diffraction pattern obtained by electron diffraction with a selected area of 300 nm ϕ . Note that the measurement area is greater than or equal to 300 nm ϕ in consideration of electron beam expansion.

As shown in FIG. 18B, the electron diffraction pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film which was obtained by selected-area electron diffraction the measurement area of which is wider than that of the nanobeam electron diffraction is a halo pattern, in which the plurality of spots observed by the nanobeam electron diffraction are not observed.

FIGS. 19A to 19C conceptually show diffraction intensity distribution in the electron diffraction patterns shown in FIGS. 17B to 17D and FIG. 18B. FIG. 19A is a conceptual diagram showing diffraction intensity distribution in the nanobeam electron diffraction patterns shown in FIGS. 17B to 17D. FIG. 19B is a conceptual diagram showing diffraction intensity distribution in the selected-area electron diffraction pattern shown in FIG. 18B. FIG. 19C is a conceptual diagram showing diffraction intensity distribution in an electron diffraction pattern of a single crystal structure or a polycrystalline structure.

In each of FIGS. 19A to 19C, the vertical axis represents the electron diffraction intensity (arbitrary unit) indicating distribution of spots or the like and the horizontal axis represents the distance from a main spot.

In FIG. 19C for the single crystal structure or the polycrystalline structure, peaks are observed at specific distances from the main spot, which are based on interplanar spacing (d value) between planes with which crystal parts are aligned.

As shown in each of FIGS. 17B to 17D, a circumferential region formed by the plurality of spots observed in the nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film has a relatively large width. Thus, FIG. 19A shows discrete distribution. Further, in the nanobeam electron diffraction pattern, a region with high luminance formed by spots which are not clear is observed in a region between concentric circles.

Further, the electron diffraction intensity distribution in the selected-area electron diffraction pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is continuous as shown in FIG. 19B. Since FIG. 19B can approximate a result obtained by widely observing the electron diffraction intensity distribution shown in FIG. 19A, the continuous intensity distribution can be considered to result from the overlapping and connection of the plurality of spots.

FIGS. 19A to 19C indicate that the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film includes a plurality of crystal parts whose surface orientations are random and whose sizes are different from each other and that the crystal parts are so minute that spots are not observed in the selected-area electron diffraction pattern.

In FIGS. 17B to 17D in which the plurality of spots are observed, the width of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is 50 nm or less. Further, since the diameter of the electron beam was reduced to 1 nm ϕ , the measurement area is greater than or equal to 5 nm and less than or equal to 10 nm. Thus, it is assumed that the diameter of the crystal part included in the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is 50 nm or less, for example, 10 nm or less or 5 nm or less.

FIG. 20 shows a nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of a quartz glass substrate. The measurement conditions were similar to those for the electron diffraction patterns shown in FIGS. 17B to 17D.

As shown in FIG. 20, the nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of the quartz glass substrate having an amorphous structure is a halo pattern without specific spots in which the luminance is gradually changed from a main spot. This means that a plurality of circumferentially distributed spots like those observed in the pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film are not observed in the pattern of a film having an amorphous structure even when electron diffraction is performed on a minute region. This indicates that the plurality of circumferentially distributed spots observed in FIGS. 17B to 17D are peculiar to the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film.

FIG. 21 shows an electron diffraction pattern obtained after one-minute irradiation of Point 2 in FIG. 17A with an electron beam whose diameter was reduced to about 1 nm ϕ .

As in the electron diffraction pattern shown in FIG. 17C, a plurality of circumferentially distributed spots are observed in the electron diffraction pattern shown in FIG. 21, and there is no significant difference from FIG. 17C. This means that the crystal part observed in the electron diffraction pattern shown in FIG. 17C existed at the time of the formation of the oxide semiconductor film and did not result from irradiation with the electron beam with the reduced diameter.

FIGS. 22A and 22B are enlarged images of portions in the cross-sectional TEM image of FIG. 17A. FIG. 22A is a cross-sectional TEM image of the vicinity of Point 1 (the surface of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film) in FIG. 17A, which was observed at an observation magnification of 8,000,000 times. FIG. 22B is a cross-sectional TEM image of the vicinity of Point 2 (the central portion of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film in the thickness direction) in FIG. 17A, which was observed at an observation magnification of 8,000,000 times.

According to each of the TEM images of FIGS. 22A and 22B, a crystalline structure cannot be clearly observed in the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film.

The samples for the electron diffraction patterns shown in FIGS. 17A to 17D and FIGS. 18A and 18B, in each of which the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film of this embodiment was formed over the quartz glass substrate, were analyzed by X-ray diffraction (XRD). FIG. 23 shows an XRD spectrum of the samples measured by an out-of-plane method.

In FIG. 23, the vertical axis represents the X-ray diffraction intensity (arbitrary unit) and the horizontal axis represents the diffraction angle 2θ (degree). Note that the XRD spectrum was measured with an X-ray diffractometer, D8 ADVANCE manufactured by Bruker AXS.

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As shown in FIG. 23, a peak corresponding to quartz is observed at around $2\theta=20^\circ$ to 23° ; however, a peak corresponding to the crystal part included in the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film cannot be observed.

The results in FIGS. 22A and 22B and FIG. 23 also indicate that the crystal part included in the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film is minute.

As described above, in the case of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film of this example, a peak indicating an orientation was not observed by X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis the measurement area of which is wide and the electron diffraction pattern obtained by selected-area electron diffraction the measurement area of which is wide is a halo pattern. This indicates that the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film of this example is macroscopically equivalent to a film having disordered atomic arrangement. However, spots (bright points) can be observed in the nanobeam electron diffraction pattern of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film which was obtained by nanobeam electron diffraction in which the diameter of an electron beam is sufficiently small (e.g., 10 nm ϕ or less). Thus, it can be assumed that the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film of this example is a film in which minute crystal parts having random surface orientations (e.g., crystal parts each with a diameter of 10 nm or less, 5 nm or less, or 3 nm or less) cohere. A nanocrystal region including the minute crystal parts is included in the entire region of the nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor film in the thickness direction.

EXAMPLE 2

In this example, the adverse effect of an impurity in an oxide semiconductor layer on crystallinity of the oxide semiconductor layer was calculated.

In this example, hydrogen was assumed as an impurity contained in an oxide semiconductor layer, and a correlation between the amount of hydrogen added to the oxide semiconductor layer and the orderliness of the oxide semiconductor layer to which hydrogen was added was calculated by first-principles calculation.

As the oxide semiconductor layer, an In—Ga—Zn oxide in which an atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:1:1 was used. First, after the structures of 28 atoms shown in FIG. 24 were optimized, the lengths of the a-axis and b-axis were made twice so that a lattice including 112 atoms was obtained. Then, a difference between a structure in which hydrogen (H) was added to the lattice including the 112 atoms and a structure in which hydrogen (H) was not added to the lattice including the 112 atoms was examined in such manner that a temperature of each structure is changed and the movement of each atom of the respective structures was calculated.

In the structure in which hydrogen was added in this example, 4 hydrogen atoms (hydrogen concentration of 3.45 atom %) or 8 hydrogen atoms (hydrogen concentration of 6.67 atom %) were added to the lattice including the 112 atoms of the In—Ga—Zn oxide in which an atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:1:1. Here, the added hydrogen atoms were arranged in a lattice of a perfect crystal.

The classical molecular dynamics calculation was carried out on the structure in which a hydrogen atom was not added, the structure in which 4 hydrogen atoms were added, and the structure in which 8 hydrogen atoms were added, which were then analyzed by the radial distribution function to examine how the bonding strength in the In—Ga—Zn oxide to which hydrogen was added was changed and how the structure

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thereof was disordered. The calculation conditions are shown in Table 1. In the calculation, “Vienna Ab initio Simulation Package (VASP)” was used.

TABLE 1

Calculation program	VASP
Basis function	plane-wave
Functional	GGA-PBE
Pseudopotential	PAW
Cut-off energy	500 eV (optimization) 260 eV (classical molecular dynamics calculation)
Number of grids at k-point	4 × 4 × 3 (optimization) 1 × 1 × 1 (classical molecular dynamics calculation)
Ensemble	NVT
Temperature	2500 K
Time interval (fs)	1.0
Total calculation time (ps)	5.0

FIGS. 25A to 25D show calculation results. FIG. 25A shows an initial crystal structure of an In—Ga—Zn oxide. FIG. 25B shows the crystal structure of the In—Ga—Zn oxide after 5 picoseconds in which a hydrogen atom was not added, in the case where the temperature was set to 2500 K. FIG. 25C shows the crystal structure of the In—Ga—Zn oxide after 5 picoseconds in which 4 hydrogen atoms (hydrogen concentration of 3.45 atom %) were added, in the case where the temperature was set to 2500 K. FIG. 25D shows the crystal structure of the In—Ga—Zn oxide after 5 picoseconds in which 8 hydrogen atoms (hydrogen concentration of 6.67 atom %) were added, in the case where the temperature was set to 2500 K.

According to FIGS. 25A to 25D, the crystal structure of the structure in which hydrogen atoms were added is more disordered than that of the structure in which a hydrogen atom was not added. This implies that the strength of bonding in the In—Ga—Zn oxide becomes lower due to addition of hydrogen.

In order to quantitatively evaluate the effect of addition of hydrogen on the bonding strength in the In—Ga—Zn oxide, the radial distribution function was calculated only with In, Ga, Zn, and O, which are elements other than hydrogen, in structures after 3 picoseconds to 5 picoseconds. The calculation results are shown in FIG. 26.

As shown in arrows in FIG. 26, a first peak gets lower and a valley between the first peak and a second peak gets shallower as a number of added hydrogen atoms is increased. Note that the radial distribution function $g(r)$ is a function representing the probability density of atoms existing at a distance of r from one atom. As the correlation between atoms becomes smaller, $g(r)$ becomes closer to 1. Therefore, the result of FIG. 26 shows that the bonding strength in the In—Ga—Zn oxide gets lower by addition of hydrogen and thus the structures are likely to be broken (disordered).

As described above, when the concentration of an impurity (here, hydrogen) in the oxide semiconductor layer gets higher, the structure of the oxide semiconductor layer is disordered and crystallinity thereof is lowered. Further, it can be said that an oxide semiconductor layer having an amorphous structure is a film containing a large amount of an impurity (here, hydrogen).

EXAMPLE 3

In this example, results of comparison between oxide semiconductor layers which differ in crystal state by various methods are described.

First, a method for manufacturing a measurement sample used in this example is described below.

<Measurement Sample A>

A CAAC-OS layer was used for a measurement sample A. In the measurement sample A, an oxide semiconductor layer was formed by a sputtering method under the following conditions: an In—Ga—Zn-oxide target (the atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:1:1) was used; an argon gas at a flow rate of 30 sccm and an oxygen gas at a flow rate of 15 sccm were used as a deposition gas; the pressure was 0.4 Pa; the substrate temperature was 400° C.; and a direct-current (DC) power of 0.5 kW was supplied. Note that a glass substrate was used as a substrate. Then, the oxide semiconductor layer was heated at 450° C. in a nitrogen atmosphere for one hour and then heated at 450° C. in an oxygen atmosphere for one hour, whereby hydrogen contained in the first oxide semiconductor layer was released and oxygen was supplied to the oxide semiconductor layer. The measurement sample A including the oxide semiconductor layer which is a CAAC-OS layer was obtained in the above manner.

Note that the film density of the measurement sample A was measured to be 6.3 g/cm³ by X-ray reflectometry (XRR). In other words, the CAAC-OS film is a film with a high film density.

<Measurement Samples B1 and B2>

A nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer was used for a measurement sample B1 and a measurement sample B2. In the measurement sample B1, an oxide semiconductor layer was formed by a sputtering method under the following conditions: an In—Ga—Zn-oxide target (the atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:1:1) was used; an argon gas at a flow rate of 30 sccm and an oxygen gas at a flow rate of 15 sccm were used as a deposition gas; the pressure was 0.4 Pa; the substrate temperature was room temperature; and a direct-current (DC) power of 0.5 kW was supplied. Note that a glass substrate was used as a substrate, and the measurement sample B1 including the oxide semiconductor layer which is a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer was obtained in the above manner.

The measurement sample B2 was formed as follows: an oxide semiconductor layer which was formed in a manner similar to that of the oxide semiconductor layer of the measurement sample B1 was heated at 450° C. in a nitrogen atmosphere for one hour and then further heated at 450° C. in an oxygen atmosphere for one hour as treatment for releasing hydrogen contained in the oxide semiconductor layer and then treatment for supplying oxygen to the oxide semiconductor layer. The measurement sample B2 was obtained in the above manner.

Note that the film densities of the measurement samples B1 and B2 were measured by X-ray reflectometry (XRR). The film density of the measurement sample B1 was 5.9 g/cm³, and the film density of the measurement sample B2 was 6.1 g/cm³.

Thus, it is confirmed that the heat treatment can increase the film density of the oxide semiconductor film.

<Measurement Sample C>

A nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer whose hydrogen content is larger than those in the measurement samples B1 and B2 was used for a measurement sample C. As described in Example 2, the structure of the oxide semiconductor layer is disordered and crystallinity thereof is lowered by addition of hydrogen to the oxide semiconductor layer. Thus, it can be said that the measurement sample C is a nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer in which crystallinity is much lower than that of the measurement sample B1 and that of the measurement sample B2.

In the measurement sample C, the oxide semiconductor layer was formed by a sputtering method under the following conditions: an In—Ga—Zn-oxide target (the atomic ratio of In to Ga and Zn is 1:1:1) was used; a mixed gas of argon and hydrogen (Ar:H₂=14.8 sccm: 0.2 sccm) was used as a deposition gas; the pressure was 2.0 Pa; the substrate temperature was room temperature; and a direct-current (DC) power of 200 W was supplied. The measurement sample C was obtained in the above manner.

Note that the film density of the measurement sample C was measured by X-ray reflectometry (XRR). The film density of the measurement sample C was 5.0 g/cm³, and it is confirmed from this result that the film density is lowered by addition of hydrogen.

FIGS. 27A to 27C show nanobeam electron diffraction patterns of the measurement samples A, B1, and C which were obtained. FIGS. 27A, 27B, and 27C are nanobeam electron diffraction patterns of the measurement sample A, the measurement sample B1, and the measurement sample C, respectively. The nanobeam electron diffraction patterns in FIGS. 27A to 27C were observed with the use of an electron beam whose diameter was reduced to 1 nmφ.

In FIGS. 27A to 27C, there are the following findings. In the measurement sample A which is a high-density CAAC-OS layer, spots are derived from crystallinity and arranged in an ordered manner. On the other hand, in the measurement sample C which is a low-density nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer, although spots of electron beams appear like spread halo pattern, nanocrystals remain partly. In the measurement sample B1 which is a medium-density nanocrystalline oxide semiconductor layer, spot-like patterns can be observed more clearly.

Accordingly, the above results show that a film has higher crystallinity as the film density gets higher. In other words, it is shown that a film having higher crystallinity can be obtained as the hydrogen concentration gets lower.

Further, localized levels (defect states) of the obtained measurement samples A, B1, and B2 were measured. Here, results of measuring the localized levels of the oxide semiconductor layers by constant photocurrent method (CPM) are described.

In the CPM measurement, the amount of light with which a surface of the measurement sample is irradiated is adjusted so that a photocurrent value is kept constant while voltage is applied between a pair of electrodes provided in contact with the oxide semiconductor layer, and then an absorption coefficient was derived from the amount of irradiation light in an intended wavelength range.

An absorption coefficient shown in FIG. 28 was obtained by removing an absorption coefficient due to the band tail from the absorption coefficient obtained by the CPM measurement performed on the measurement sample A. That is, an absorption coefficient due to defects is shown in FIG. 28. An absorption coefficient shown in FIG. 29A was obtained by removing an absorption coefficient due to the band tail from the absorption coefficient obtained by the CPM measurement performed on the measurement sample B1. That is, an absorption coefficient due to defects is shown in FIG. 29A. An absorption coefficient shown in FIG. 29B was obtained by removing an absorption coefficient due to the band tail from the absorption coefficient obtained by the CPM measurement performed on the measurement sample B2. That is, an absorption coefficient due to defects is shown in FIG. 29B.

In FIG. 28 and FIGS. 29A and 29B, the horizontal axis indicates the absorption coefficient, and the vertical axis indicates the photon energy. The conduction band minimum energy and the valence band maximum energy of the oxide

semiconductor layer are set to 0 eV and 3.15 eV, respectively, on the vertical axis in FIG. 28 and FIGS. 29A and 29B. Each curve in FIG. 28 and FIGS. 29A and 29B represents a relation between the absorption coefficient and photon energy, which corresponds to defect states.

In the curve shown in FIG. 28, the absorption coefficient due to defect states was $5.86 \times 10^{-4} / \text{cm}^{-1}$. That is, the CAAC-OS film is a film with a low density of defect states where the absorption coefficient due to defect states is lower than $1 \times 10^{-3} / \text{cm}$, preferably lower than $1 \times 10^{-4} / \text{cm}$.

FIG. 29A shows that, in the measurement sample B1, the absorption coefficient due to defect states was $5.28 \times 10^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. FIG. 29B shows that, in the measurement sample B2, the absorption coefficient due to defect states was $1.75 \times 10^{-2} \text{ cm}^{-1}$. Thus, the heat treatment can reduce the number of defects in the oxide semiconductor layer.

According to the results obtained in the above manner, classification of crystal states of an oxide semiconductor (denoted by OS) is compared to silicon (denoted by Si), which are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

	Amorphous	Microcrystal	Polycrystal	Continuous crystal	Single crystal
OS	a-OS a-OS:H	nc-OS $\mu\text{c-OS}$	Polycrystalline OS	CAAC-OS	Single crystal OS
Nanobeam electron diffraction	Halo	Ring + Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Crystal part	—	nm- μm	Discontinuous	Continuously connected	—
DOS	High	Slightly low	—	Low	Extremely low
Density	Low	Medium	—	High	—
Si	a-Si a-Si:H	nc-Si $\mu\text{c-Si}$	Polycrystalline Si	CG silicon	Single crystal Si

As shown in Table 2, examples of oxide semiconductors having crystal structures include an amorphous oxide semiconductor (a-OS and a-OS:H), a microcrystalline oxide semiconductor (nc-OS and $\mu\text{c-OS}$), a polycrystalline oxide semiconductor (polycrystalline OS), a continuous crystal oxide semiconductor (CAAC-OS), and a single crystal oxide semiconductor (single crystal OS). Note that examples of the crystal state of silicon include, as shown in Table 2, amorphous silicon (a-Si and a-Si:H), microcrystalline silicon (nc-Si and $\mu\text{c-Si}$), polycrystalline silicon (polycrystalline Si), continuous crystal silicon (continuous grain (CG) silicon), and single crystal silicon (single crystal Si).

When the oxide semiconductors in the above crystal states are subjected to electron diffraction (nanobeam electron diffraction) using an electron beam whose diameter is reduced to less than or equal to 10 nm ϕ , the following electron diffraction patterns (nanobeam electron diffraction patterns) can be observed. A halo pattern (also referred to as a halo ring or a halo) is observed in the amorphous oxide semiconductor. Spots and/or a ring pattern are/is observed in the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor. Spots are observed in the polycrystalline oxide semiconductor. Spots are observed in the continuous crystal oxide semiconductor. Spots are observed in the single crystal oxide semiconductor.

According to the nanobeam electron diffraction pattern, a crystal part in the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor has a diameter of nanometers (nm) to micrometers (μm). The polycrystalline oxide semiconductor has discontinuous grain boundaries between crystal parts. No boundary is observed between crystal parts in the continuous crystal oxide semiconductor and the crystal parts are connected continuously.

The density of the oxide semiconductor in each crystal state is described. The amorphous oxide semiconductor has a

low density. The microcrystalline oxide semiconductor has a medium density. The continuous crystal oxide semiconductor has a high density. That is, the density of the continuous crystal oxide semiconductor is higher than that of the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor, and the density of the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor is higher than that of the amorphous oxide semiconductor.

A feature of density of states (DOS) existing in the oxide semiconductor in each crystal state is described. The DOS of the amorphous oxide semiconductor is high. The DOS of the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor is slightly low. The DOS of the continuous crystal oxide semiconductor is low. The DOS of the single crystal oxide semiconductor is extremely low. That is, the DOS of the single crystal oxide semiconductor is lower than that of the continuous crystal oxide semiconductor, the DOS of the continuous crystal oxide semiconductor is lower than that of the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor, and the DOS of the microcrystalline oxide semiconductor is lower than that of the amorphous oxide semiconductor.

The oxide semiconductor layer of one embodiment of the present invention includes a continuous crystalline oxide semiconductor with a low DOS as a channel which is a main current path, and includes a microcrystalline oxide semiconductor with a DOS lower than that of an amorphous oxide semiconductor at the interface between an insulating layer and the channel. Thus, a transistor including the oxide semiconductor layer can have high reliability.

REFERENCE NUMERALS

102: insulating layer, 104: oxide semiconductor layer, 104a: region, 104b: region, 106: insulating layer, 114: oxide semiconductor layer, 114a: region, 114b: region, 124: oxide semiconductor layer, 124a: region, 124b: region, 124c: region, 250: memory cell, 251: memory cell array, 251a: memory cell array, 251b: memory cell array, 253: peripheral circuit, 254: capacitor, 260: transistor, 262: transistor, 264: capacitor, 300: transistor, 301: substrate, 302: gate electrode layer, 303: insulating layer, 304: oxide semiconductor layer, 304a: oxide semiconductor layer, 304b: oxide semiconductor layer, 305a: source electrode layer, 305b: drain electrode layer, 306: insulating layer, 307: insulating layer, 310: transistor, 314: oxide semiconductor layer, 314a: oxide semiconductor layer, 314b: oxide semiconductor layer, 316a: source electrode layer, 316b: drain electrode layer, 320: transistor, 324: oxide semiconductor layer, 324a: oxide semiconductor layer, 324b: oxide semiconductor layer, 324c: oxide semiconductor layer, 350: transistor, 351: insulating layer, 352: insulating layer, 360: transistor, 364: oxide semiconductor layer, 364a: oxide semiconductor layer, 364b: oxide semiconductor layer,

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364c: oxide semiconductor layer, 370: transistor, 402: insulating layer, 404: oxide semiconductor layer, 404a: oxide semiconductor layer, 404b: oxide semiconductor layer, 404c: oxide semiconductor layer, 410: insulating layer, 500: substrate, 501: pixel portion, 502: scan line driver circuit, 503: scan line driver circuit, 504: signal line driver circuit, 510: capacitor wiring, 512: gate wiring, 513: gate wiring, 514: drain electrode layer, 516: transistor, 517: transistor, 518: liquid crystal element, 519: liquid crystal element, 520: pixel, 521: switching transistor, 522: driver transistor, 523: capacitor, 524: light-emitting element, 525: signal line, 526: scan line, 527: power supply line, 528: common electrode, 801: transistor, 802: transistor, 803: transistor, 804: transistor, 811: transistor, 812: transistor, 813: transistor, 814: transistor, 901: RF circuit, 902: analog baseband circuit, 903: digital baseband circuit, 904: battery, 905: power supply circuit, 906: application processor, 907: CPU, 908: DSP, 910: flash memory, 911: display controller, 912: memory circuit, 913: display, 914: display portion, 915: source driver, 916: gate driver, 917: audio circuit, 918: keyboard, 919: touch sensor, 1000: sputtering target, 1001: ion, 1002: sputtered particle, 1003: deposition surface, 1021: main body, 1022: fixing portion, 1023: display portion, 1024: operation button, 1025: external memory slot, 1030: housing, 1031: housing, 1032: display panel, 1033: speaker, 1034: microphone, 1035: operation key, 1036: pointing device, 1037: camera lens, 1038: external connection terminal, 1040: solar cell, 1041: external memory slot, 1050: television set, 1051: housing, 1052: storage medium recording and reproducing portion, 1053: display portion, 1054: external connection terminal, 1055: stand, 1056: external memory, 1101: main body, 1102: housing, 1103a: display portion, 1103b: display portion, 1104: keyboard.

This application is based on Japanese Patent Application serial No. 2012-288288 filed with the Japan Patent Office on Dec. 28, 2012, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

The invention claimed is:

1. A semiconductor device comprising:
an oxide semiconductor layer,
wherein the oxide semiconductor layer comprises a first region and a second region,
wherein the first region has a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm,
wherein the second region has a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of a surface of the oxide semiconductor layer, and
wherein, in the first region, circumferentially distributed spots are observed in a nanobeam electron diffraction in which a diameter of an electron beam is 1 nm ϕ or more and 10 nm ϕ or less.
2. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein the oxide semiconductor layer comprises one of indium, gallium, and zinc.
3. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein oxide semiconductors included in each of the first region and the second region have different compositions from each other.
4. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein, in the first region, wherein a halo pattern is observed in a selected-area electron diffraction using a transmission electron microscope where a diameter of an electron beam is 300 nm ϕ or more.
5. The semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein a film density of the second region is higher than a film density of the first region.

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6. A semiconductor device comprising:
an oxide semiconductor layer;
an insulating layer over the oxide semiconductor layer;
a gate electrode layer over the insulating layer, the gate electrode layer overlapping with the oxide semiconductor layer; and
a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer each electrically connected to the oxide semiconductor layer, wherein the oxide semiconductor layer includes a first region and a second region,
wherein the first region has a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm,
wherein the second region has a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of a surface of the oxide semiconductor layer, and
wherein the first region is positioned between the insulating layer and the second region.
7. The semiconductor device according to claim 6, wherein the oxide semiconductor layer comprises one of indium, gallium, and zinc.
8. The semiconductor device according to claim 6, wherein oxide semiconductors included in each of the first region and the second region have different compositions from each other.
9. The semiconductor device according to claim 6, wherein, in the first region, circumferentially distributed spots are observed in a nanobeam electron diffraction in which a diameter of an electron beam is 1 nm ϕ or more and 10 nm ϕ or less.
10. The semiconductor device according to claim 9, wherein, in the first region, wherein a halo pattern is observed in a selected-area electron diffraction using a transmission electron microscope where a diameter of an electron beam is 300 nm ϕ or more.
11. The semiconductor device according to claim 6, wherein a film density of the second region is higher than a film density of the first region.
12. A semiconductor device comprising:
a first insulating layer;
an oxide semiconductor layer over the first insulating layer;
a second insulating layer over the oxide semiconductor layer;
a gate electrode layer over the second insulating layer, the gate electrode layer overlapping with the oxide semiconductor layer; and
a source electrode layer and a drain electrode layer each electrically connected to the oxide semiconductor layer, wherein the oxide semiconductor layer includes a first region, a second region over the first region, and a third region over the second region,
wherein each of the first region and the third region has a crystal whose size is less than or equal to 10 nm, and
wherein the second region has a crystal part whose c-axis is aligned in a direction parallel to a normal vector of a surface of the oxide semiconductor layer.
13. The semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein the oxide semiconductor layer comprises one of indium, gallium, and zinc.
14. The semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein oxide semiconductors included in each of the first region and the second region have different compositions from each other, and
wherein oxide semiconductors included in each of the second region and the third region each have different compositions from each other.
15. The semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein, in one of the first region and the third region, cir-

cumferentially distributed spots are observed in a nanobeam electron diffraction in which a diameter of an electron beam is 1 nm ϕ or more and 10 nm ϕ or less.

16. The semiconductor device according to claim 15, wherein, in one of the first region and the third region, 5 wherein a halo pattern is observed in a selected-area electron diffraction using a transmission electron microscope where a diameter of an electron beam is 300 nm ϕ or more.

17. The semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein a film density of the second region is higher than a 10 film density of one of the first region and the third region.

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